

Germany reduces aid to Israel

BONN (AFP) — Germany announced Saturday it was reducing aid to Israel and boosting assistance for the Palestinians and development projects in Jordan. The aim is to back the Middle East peace process, a spokesman for the development ministry told AFP. He said that since 1968, Israel has received 140 million marks (\$93 million) in financial aid from Germany but that for next year, an interim plan has been negotiated. The spokesman refused to give details, but the newspaper Bild reported Saturday that the reduction of German aid has been under negotiation for the past year among Germany, France and Israel. The three countries promised to keep the talks secret so as not to interfere with the Israeli election campaign, the daily said. Bild said that in 1997, Israel will receive \$33 million and the Palestinians \$53 million. The newspaper also said Germany pledged to continue for five more years its aid to an irrigation programme in the desert, to the tune of \$6.5 million a year. It said this continued aid was in response to a request from Shimon Peres, who lost the prime minister's race in the election Wednesday to right-wing leader Benjamin Netanyahu.

Jordan Times



AMMAN SUNDAY, JUNE 2, 1996, MUHARRAM 16, 1417

Saddam wants quick start of oil deal

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq's leader Saddam Hussein on Saturday reviewed with senior aides means of hastening the start of the oil-for-food deal Baghdad signed with the United Nations on May 20, the official Iraqi News Agency (INA) reported. "President Saddam Hussein chaired a joint meeting of the Revolutionary Command Council, the regional command of the Arab Baath Socialist Party and the cabinet... to review next steps by the U.N. and the Iraqi authorities concerned to execute the memorandum of understanding signed between Iraq and the U.N. and means of hastening the implementation of these steps," INA said.

Kabariti briefs Srour on visits

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti on Saturday briefed Lower House Speaker Saad Hayel Srour on his visits to Algeria and Tunisia and the talks he held with Algerian and Tunisian officials. Mr. Srour said in a statement to Petra that he and the prime minister "discussed the latest developments in the region, particularly the results of the Israeli elections. Mr. Srour added the prime minister stressed that the peace process "is a strategic choice of the people of the Middle East and it is not a choice of leaders."

Quake rocks Aqaba

AQABA (Petra) — A slight earthquake rocked Aqaba on Saturday. Civil Defence sources said no casualties were reported and that the tremor, with its epicentre about 100 kilometres south of Aqaba, registered 4.3 degrees on Richter scale.

Jammo meets Indian MP

AMMAN (Petra) — First Deputy Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Abdul Baqi Jammo received Indian Member of Parliament K.M. Khan and discussed with him Jordanian-Indian relations and the means to enhance them. Mr. Khan told Petra that relations with India's relations with Arab and Islamic countries "are always improving." He described Jordanian-Indian relations as "distinguished."

Hizbollah guerrillas attack Israeli patrol

MARIJAYOUN (AFP) — Hizbollah guerrillas fired automatic weapons and rockets at an Israeli patrol in the South Lebanon "security zone" occupied by the Jewish state, Lebanese security officials said. A Hizbollah spokesman in Beirut said the attack at Bir Kallab on the edge of the zone left "several victims" among the soldiers without specifying if they were dead or wounded. It targeted a "foot patrol of Zionist soldiers and certainly caused casualties in its ranks," the spokesman said. But security services had no immediate reports of casualties. Hizbollah has stepped up the pace of its attacks on Israeli soldiers in the occupied zone since the start of the week, carrying them out at a rate of one a day.

Tight race seen in Czech polls

PRAGUE (AP) — Premier Vaclav Klaus was reported in a tight race in nationwide elections Saturday, with exit polls indicating his three-party governing coalition may lose its parliamentary majority. Early exit polls by the German IFES polling institute suggested Mr. Klaus' Civic Democratic Party had up to 33 per cent of the vote and a comfortable 10 per cent margin over the opposition Social Democrats of Milos Zeman. But subsequent exit poll results carried by Czech state and private television suggested the race was much closer. In the first elections since Czechoslovakia split peacefully in 1993, the later exit polls showed Mr. Klaus' party between 28.9 and 29.4 per cent, a narrow lead over the Social Democrats' 26.6 to 27 per cent. Mr. Klaus' partners in the centre-right governing coalition, the Christian Democrats and the Civic Democratic Alliance, were reported between 7.6 and 8.5 per cent respectively. The communists had more than 10 per cent and the right-wing radical Republican Party was doing surprisingly well, polling between 8.1 and 8.6 per cent.

King rejects fears Netanyahu will set back peace prospects

HM, in CNN interview, says too much emphasis should not be put on results of Israeli elections

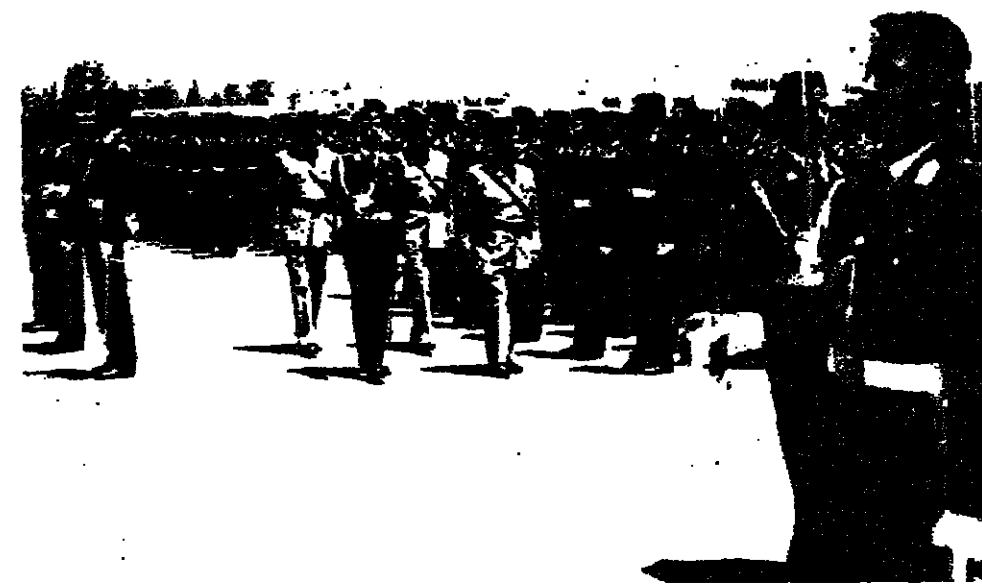
King, in speech at Muta graduation, reaffirms commitment to seeking comprehensive peace

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein said on Saturday he was optimistic the Middle East peace process would go on under Israel's new right-wing government and he looked forward to working with Prime Minister-elect Benjamin Netanyahu. "I believe chances are, there are and are great and we look toward the future with hope," King Hussein said in an interview with Cable News Network (CNN). It was his first comment after Mr. Netanyahu defeated Prime Minister Shimon Peres. "I am very optimistic the peace process will continue towards its objective of reaching comprehensive peace in the region," the King said. King Hussein, who spoke to Mr. Netanyahu after his election victory was confirmed Friday, said he had "no fears whatsoever, nor suspicions" that the peace negotiations were in jeopardy. King Hussein spoke in a telephone interview with CNN. King Hussein told CNN that he hoped to meet with Mr. Netanyahu "before too long."

He rejected fears that Mr. Netanyahu's election would undermine peace. "I really don't believe that there is any reason to put too much emphasis on this election as a sign that the Israelis are moving away from peace," he said. "I believe the issue was the person of the prime minister who would guide Israel in terms of the coming period, but I do not think there is a popular change whatsoever regarding peace," he said. King Hussein said he had congratulated Mr. Netanyahu and "we spoke about the peace process and the issue of peace, which is very dear to us, and he assured me he will do whatever he could to reach out for full peace and I gave him full support."

He said Mr. Netanyahu's victory would not endanger the October 1994 Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty that ended a 46-year state of war with Israel and opened the road towards full economic and political links. "I hope we will work together to ensure the treaty becomes something everybody feels belongs to the people on both sides of the new border... an example and a source of inspiration to others in the region. I have no fears whatsoever, no suspicions." King Hussein also said he hoped he would never see a divided Jerusalem, with a wall separating Arabs and Israelis. "I hope Jerusalem will become an emblem for peace..." he said. King Hussein said he will have an opportunity to re-evaluate strategy at a prearranged summit with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat at Aqaba next week.

In separate comments, King Hussein on Saturday reaffirmed Jordan's total commitment to the peace process and its keenness on involving all concerned parties in the peace process to achieve a comprehensive and durable peace. Addressing a ceremony held at Muta University on the occasion of the graduation of the ninth batch of army and police officers, the King said: "The peace in which we believe and seek is a just and comprehensive which would benefit all the people in this region, a peace that can be defended by the future generations." "Peace is indispensable for this region and it is most wise and reasonable to deal with the Arab-Israeli conflict with realism and with reckoning its far reaching future dimension," King Hussein said. "We have gone along the path of peace with our Arab brothers and with the nation's consensus and out of our own conviction that the people of this region deserve



His Majesty King Hussein on Saturday inspects a guard of honour at Muta University mounted on the occasion of the graduation of officers (Armed Forces photo)

Amman summit plans said on hold pending formation of Israeli cabinet

AMMAN (Agencies) — The leaders of Jordan, Egypt and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) will not set the date for their next summit until Israeli Prime Minister-elect Benjamin Netanyahu, who has been invited, forms his government, an official said Saturday. The summit had been scheduled for next week at Aqaba, but will be "delayed pending the formation of a new Israeli government," a senior Jordanian official was quoted as saying by AFP. The official requested anonymity, the agency said. He added that "contacts had been made to prepare the summit and set a definitive date."

Education Minister Abdullah Ensour, acting as interim prime minister, told AFP on Friday that Mr. Netanyahu was welcome to attend after he was declared the winner in Israeli elections over Mr. Peres. His Majesty King Hussein, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat last held a summit in May in Cairo and agreed to meet again in June in Aqaba. They had planned to invite Mr. Peres, an architect of Israel's peace agreements with the Palestinians and Jordan. Mr. Netanyahu spoke with President Mubarak on Friday and said he wanted to meet Mr. Mubarak after he forms a new Israeli cabinet, state-run Egyptian media reported Saturday. Mr. Mubarak said he would welcome such a visit, which would mark the first meeting between the two leaders, the media reported. Egypt was the first Arab

country to sign a peace treaty with Israel in 1979, ending 30 years of war. Relations, however, have never warmed, although Mr. Mubarak has sought to act as a mediator in negotiations between Israel and other Arab parties. In recent days, Egyptian officials — without elaborating — have suggested that Mr. Netanyahu's policies on the peace process may not be as right-wing as they appeared during the election campaign. Most Arab commentators expect the rightward shift in Israeli politics to slow the peace process, but not derail it, and a visit by Mr. Netanyahu so soon after the elections would signal an Israeli commitment to its still-uncertain ties with its Arab neighbours. (Continued on page 7)

Netanyahu to announce his security, peace policies today

TEL AVIV (AP) — Prime Minister-elect Benjamin Netanyahu spent the Jewish Sabbath with friends and family in Jerusalem, after receiving an invitation from U.S. President Clinton to visit the White House this summer. Mr. Netanyahu, who emerged victorious last week in Israel's elections, is planning a speech on Sunday that will set out his policies on security — and assuage world concern that his hard line on the Palestinians will endanger the peace process. Mr. Netanyahu, 46, rode to victory on a wave of fear following four bombings by Palestinian militants that killed 59 people earlier this year, and has promised to make security his number one concern. He also said that he would slow peace negotiations and renege on some promises to the Palestinians made by

Prime Minister Shimon Peres, including Israeli troop redeployment from Hebron and holding talks on the Palestinian claim to East Jerusalem. Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, clearly worried about the political upset, convened his cabinet Friday night. "Mr. Netanyahu is a political person, not an adventurer," said Marwan Kanafani, a top aide to Mr. Arafat. "I think he will respect and should respect the agreement which has been signed between the Palestinian National Authority and the State of Israel." Other leaders said Mr. Netanyahu should be given the benefit of the doubt. King Hussein told Cable News Network that he believed Mr. Netanyahu would uphold Israel's peace efforts, and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher urged world leaders not to prejudge

the new premier (see separate stories). President Clinton — who was seen as strongly backing Mr. Peres — called Mr. Netanyahu Friday to congratulate him and ask him to visit the White House sometime this summer, said Netanyahu spokesman Michael Stoltz. Mr. Netanyahu also spoke with other world leaders, including King Hussein, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and French President Jacques Chirac, according to Mr. Stoltz. The new premier had no plans to meet with Mr. Arafat. On Saturday, Mr. Netanyahu maintained his public silence, though he emerged with his wife and took a brisk early morning stroll through the tree-lined streets of the Rehavia neighbourhood. Later, he went to King David Hotel where he lunched with his wife.

Netanyahu will close Orient House — Olmert

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israeli Prime Minister-elect Benjamin Netanyahu will carry out his electoral promise and shut down the unofficial representation of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in East Jerusalem, the city's Israeli mayor said Saturday. Ehud Olmert told Israel's army radio that Mr. Netanyahu, narrowly elected as Israel's next premier in Wednesday's vote, would shut the Orient House as the presence of the PNA there was a threat to "the unity of the capital of Israel." "I am convinced that the new prime minister will stick to his commitment and shut the Orient House," Mr. Olmert told the radio, adding nonetheless that there was no timetable for the closure. "I prefer to discuss that directly with Mr. Netanyahu," said the mayor, who is a member of Mr. Netanyahu's Likud Party and close to the right-wing leader. The Orient House officially served as a headquarters for the Palestinian delegation to peace talks with Israel. Israel's last Likud leader, Yitzhak Shamir, also said he would shut down the institution, but never carried out his threat. Right-wing Israelis have long complained about political and quasi-government activities at the Orient House, where Palestinian leaders often give press briefings and host diplomats. Another Likud member of parliament, Tzahi Hanegbi, told Reuters that Jerusalem was not on the negotiating table and the promised evacuation of Israeli troops from Hebron should be cancelled pending new negotiations.

Syria says no alternative but to pursue peace talks

Combined agency dispatches SYRIA, SAYING there was no alternative to the peace process, urged the United States on Saturday to call for a new round of Israeli-Syrian peace talks after the victory of Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel's election. But Damascus' government newspaper Al Thawra stressed the resumption should be based on Washington's land-for-peace formula which paved the way for the launching of the Middle East peace process in Madrid in 1991. "The U.S. is urged, after the end of the election battle in Israel, to work to resume the peace process on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks in accordance with the U.S. 'land-for-peace' initiative," the official daily Al Thawra said. Right-wing Netanyahu, who has vowed not to return the Golan Heights back to Syria, narrowly beat incumbent Prime Minister Shimon Peres in Wednesday's polls. Al Thawra said that facts in

the region proved that there was no alternative for leaders of the region but to continue the peace process. "Although the peace process, reached a deadlock because of Israel's obstinacy, several facts which could not be ignored had emerged notably that there is no logical alternative to the continuation of the peace process," the paper said. Mr. Peres' outgoing government broke off the last round of peace talks with Syria and recalled its peace team from Washington in March after a wave of suicide bombings by Palestinian militants killed 59 people in Israel. Al Thawra said there was no big difference between Israel's Labour and Likud parties, recalling that the peace process had started while Likud was in power and that no tangible progress was made on the Syrian track when Labour took power. "Both parties worked to block the peace process. (Former Likud Premier Yitzhak) Shamir worked de-

liberately to prolong the peace talks, (late Labour Premier Yitzhak) Rabin and after him Peres worked to get U.S. military and financial aid without trying to further the peace talks," Al Thawra said. The paper reiterated Syria's demands for full Israeli withdrawal from the (Continued on page 7)

Assad gets U.S. message

Syrian President Hafez Al Assad on Saturday received a message from U.S. President Bill Clinton on the Middle East peace process, the official Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) reported. It said Mr. Clinton reiterated Washington's commitment to achieving a "just comprehensive peace in the region."

Clinton assures Arafat on peace process — spokesman

GAZA CITY (AFP) — U.S. President Bill Clinton has reassured Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat that he will continue to back the peace process following the election victory in Israel of right-wing leader Benjamin Netanyahu, a Palestinian spokesman said Saturday. Mr. Nabil Abu Rdaina said Mr. Arafat had received a letter from the U.S. president in which Mr. Clinton said his administration would continue to back the peace process and support Palestinian hopes for a better future. The letter was handed over to Mr. Arafat by the U.S. consul in East Jerusalem, Edward Abingdon. The Palestinians and other Arabs have expressed some concern over Mr. Netanyahu's narrow electoral victory

over peace architect Shimon Peres, which was confirmed Friday. Mr. Netanyahu has ruled out territorial concessions to the Palestinians and has promised to look at proposals for funding further Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. But Mr. Abu Rdaina said Mr. Clinton's letter had stressed that the United States was committed to securing a just and comprehensive peace settlement for the Middle East. Mr. Clinton, who solidly backed Mr. Peres in the polls, pledged afterwards to continue backing Israel's quest for "peace with security." He also invited Mr. Netanyahu to visit Washington shortly after his victory was confirmed.

Mr. Clinton said Saturday that Israel's close election showed how divided the country was, but that his telephone call with Mr. Netanyahu had been "encouraging." "I think we ought to give the new prime minister a chance to put his cabinet together," Mr. Clinton said Saturday. "He said some very encouraging things to me on the phone." "You look how closely divided people of Israel are... that's what this election means — it's a difficult environment, a tough neighbourhood, there's a lot of history there," he said. The president also reaffirmed Washington's firm support for Israel. "The partnership between (Continued on page 7)

Palestinians urge Israel to stick to accords, resume peace talks

Combined agency dispatches THE PALESTINIAN National Authority and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Executive Committee on Saturday called on the incoming Israeli government of right-winger Benjamin Netanyahu to press ahead with implementing the PLO-Israeli peace deal. In their first official comment on Wednesday's election in which Mr. Netanyahu narrowly edged out Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's peace partner Shimon Peres, they demanded resumption of talks on the future of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. "In a joint meeting presided over by President Yasser Arafat, the PLO Executive Committee and the Palesti-

nian cabinet called on the new Israeli government to continue the peace process and to honour implementing what has been agreed upon," said an official statement read by Mr. Arafat's spokesman after the meeting early on Saturday. "We call on the new government to implement the principle of the exchange of land for peace," it said. PLO officials said Mr. Arafat was disappointed by the defeat of Mr. Peres and feared that the hardline Netanyahu, who opposes the land-for-peace concept, would not continue talks on the "final status" of the West Bank and Gaza Strip which the Peres government started on May 5. "In light of the new de-

velopments, the PLO calls on the international community, on the EU and the U.N., on the Islamic states and African states to intensify efforts to push the peace process forward," the PLO statement said. PLO Executive Committee member Mahmoud Abbas, an architect of the 1993 PLO-Israeli peace deal, said the first lower-level contact between the new government and the PNA took place on Friday. He said a Netanyahu adviser told him in a telephone call that the new prime minister would continue peace talks. "Dore Gold told me that the new government was committed to the peace pro-

(Continued on page 7)

Washington seeks to regain control of peace process

By Patrick Worsnip
Reuter

WASHINGTON — The United States took its first steps on Friday to reassert control over the Middle East peace process, jarring by the triumph of Likud night-winger Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel's election on Wednesday.

U.S. leaders invited Mr. Netanyahu to Washington, pressed him to respect Israeli commitments to the Palestinians under previously signed agreements, and urged the Arabs not to panic.

Mr. Netanyahu's defeat of incumbent Labour Prime Minister Shimon Peres, who had been heavily backed by Washington, threatened to undo years of U.S. diplomatic efforts by stalling peace talks with the Palestinians and Syria.

The Likud Party leader has laid down much tougher terms than Mr. Peres for the future development of Palestinian self-rule and has said he will not return the Golan Heights to Syria, the key demand of Damascus.

But, quickly reconciling himself to the reality of Mr. Netanyahu's victory, President Bill Clinton congratulated him on Friday and invited him to the White House. The future Israeli leader said he would come soon after forming his government.

Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who has spearheaded the U.S. peace effort with more than 20 trips to the Middle East, hinted strongly that whatever Mr. Netanyahu may have said in the past, Washington did not see his views as set in stone.

"We'll have an opportunity to have good and candid discussions with him, letting him know what in our view is feasible in this peace process," Mr. Christopher told reporters.

The secretary of state declared that Washington was "going to continue to

pursue the goal of a comprehensive peace in the most effective way we can find."

Significantly, Mr. Christopher also underlined that there could be no going back on the interim accords of the past three years under which Israel has handed over parts of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to Palestinian self-rule.

"We would be encouraging the new government in general terms to keep the commitments and the documents that have been agreed to between Israel and the Palestinians," he said.

His words, although mildly phrased, appeared to be a clear shot across the bows of anyone in Likud who might be tempted to try to "roll back" the so-called Oslo accords.

Mr. Netanyahu told the Israel council on foreign relations last month that a Likud government would "recognise the facts created by the Oslo agreements, but will act to reduce the threats they pose."

Mr. Netanyahu also set conditions for the negotiations on the final status of the Palestinian entity, which opened this month but were suspended for a halt to Palestinian violence and anti-Israeli propaganda.

Mr. Christopher conceded that "naturally" there had been Arab concern at the results of the elections, and said Washington was sensitive to that.

He said he had spoken to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Syrian Foreign Minister Faruk Al Shara, and sent telegrams to all Arab capitals.

"Essentially they've been brief messages urging them not to prejudge the new government to allow Mr. Netanyahu to form his cabinet. Not to rush to judgment with respect to positions they might take," Mr. Christopher said.

HABITAT II: A Turkish U.N. policeman mans a police barricade near the site of the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) Saturday, as he chats with passers-by, mostly women and children who wanted access into a park. The conference is aimed at bringing a "new concept of partnership" in seeking solutions to urban development problems. (Reuters photo)



Monks' slayings are another blow to French role in Algeria

By Christopher Burns
The Associated Press

PARIS — The slayings of seven French Catholic monks by militants in Algeria are a brutal reminder that Paris remains unavoidably linked to the civil war in its former colony.

Attacks on French targets will persist as long as Paris fails to pressure Algeria into cutting a deal with the militant opposition, says a French government analyst who was reprimanded after writing a book.

In it, she urges linking international aid to democratic reform and getting Washington involved in mediating an end to Algeria's four-year insurgency that has left more than 40,000 dead.

Meanwhile, a respected French consulting firm says without democratic reform Algeria faces economic collapse.

France supports the government of the country it ruled for 120 years with about five billion francs (\$1 billion) in aid annually.

"The Algerian government refuses to negotiate, so since France is financially supporting it, France becomes a target," said Lucille Provost, pseudonym of the finance ministry

analyst who wrote the book, "The Second War in Algeria."

"I think another terrorist attack is possible" in France, she said in an interview with the Associated Press.

From July to October last year, terrorist bombings in France linked to Algerian militants left eight dead and 160 injured. French nationals in Algeria have periodically been assassinated.

The latest victims were the seven monks, kidnapped in March by the extremist Armed Islamic Group, which said last week it had beheaded them because France had refused to free jailed Algerian militants.

The French foreign ministry on Thursday said the monks' remains were found and condemned the murders.

The Islamic Salvation Front, the main force behind Algeria's insurgency, also condemned the murders, which could cause a backlash.

Ms. Provost said the kidnapping was a desperate attempt by militants to gain attention as President Liamine Zeroual ignored them.

Mr. Zeroual, a retired general elected in November after being appointed,

on May 5 announced legislative elections in 1997 but didn't say whether Muslim fundamentalists would be allowed to run.

Elections the Islamic Salvation Front were expected to win in 1992 were cancelled.

Officials have reprimanded Provost, who spoke to the Associated Press on condition her identity not be revealed, and threatened further punishment. They declined to comment on her book's conclusions.

Algerian media reacted angrily to the book, calling it another attempt by the French to meddle in internal affairs.

Ms. Provost arrived in Algeria the year the regime cancelled the elections and watched the country descend into a violent insurgency. Algeria gained independence from France in 1962.

French President Jacques Chirac has said France's aid should be linked to Algeria's democratisation but has not followed through as companies from Britain, the United States and other countries increasingly win large contracts there.

France has a terrible fear of losing its influence" and fears an exodus of Algerians to France if extremists take over, Provost said.

France already is home to about 600,000 Algerians.

A recent study by Nord Sud Export, a French consulting company, said economic reforms demanded by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) were not being carried out and predicted collapse without wider democratic participation. That would give the government the support needed to fix the economy.

The IMF demanded the reforms in exchange for refinancing Algeria's \$26 billion debt.

The consulting firm predicted only two per cent growth this year — less than half the IMF forecast — and declining agricultural production in a country that already cannot feed itself.

The United States, which has urged a compromise between the government and opposition groups, has so far declined to play a greater role in Algeria.

"A U.S. diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Washington does not think the situation in Algeria is dire economically or politically and that it remained to be seen whether Algeria will allow democratic reform."

Turkish government considers allowing broadcasts in Kurdish language

ISTANBUL (R) — Turkey's conservative government is seeking to cut through a years-old taboo and introduce Kurdish broadcasting in renewed signs of a softer approach to a Kurdish separatist insurgency, politicians said on Friday.

"It is being discussed — I myself prepared a report on this issue. And other reports are also being looked at," Naim Geylani, a deputy from Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz's Motherland Party from the southeastern region of Hakkari, told Reuters.

Cabinet members said they had taken up the issue at a meeting in the main southeastern city of Diyarbakir on Sunday.

Ahmet Ozer, head of a grouping of mayors from the southeast, said they had prepared a report on Kurdish television ahead of the cabinet meeting at the bidding of the minister responsible for the media, Ali Talip Ozdemir, also from Motherland.

"There is a definite need for Kurdish television and the government has accepted this," Mr. Gureli said. "In the region about 90 per cent of people watch Med TV, which broadcasts distortions and lies," he said, speaking by telephone from a remote district of Hakkari, which borders Iran and Iraq.

The Kurdish-language Med TV, beamed since last May via satellite from Britain, has

infuriated Turkish authorities. They say it is backed by the rebel Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), whose 12-year-old fight for self-rule has cost more than 19,000 lives.

People in the region say Med TV is watched even by village guards, a state-paid, mainly Kurdish militia armed to fight the PKK. Kurds fleeing the fight with the PKK to settle in shanties in western towns invest in satellite dishes to see it.

Rights activists say giving greater cultural rights to Kurds would go a long way towards ending the PKK's fight.

Kurdish broadcasting is banned in Turkey, and debate of the Kurdish issue is stifled

by Turkey's many laws that punish "separatism" and "regionalist" statements. Scores of writers and intellectuals are in jail for writings and speeches calling for greater rights for Turkey's Kurds.

The latest stirrings in Motherland suggest it may be trying to revive moderate ideas which the late President Turgut Ozal had worked on when he led the party as premier in the 1980s.

But the left-wing, pro-Kurdish Demokrasi newspaper poured scorn on the moves as aimed at hitting Med TV with nationalist Turkish propaganda. "Contra-TV is coming," the daily plastered on its front page on Friday, referring to

what activists say is a shady "contra-guerrilla" group close to the state.

Deputies from the southeast say no one would watch state propaganda broadcasts that simply denounce the PKK.

"There must be private television, monitored but not censored by the state, that broadcast objectively and allow the Kurdish people to develop and enjoy their culture, language and music," said Motherland Diyarbakir Deputy Sevgimullah Seydaoglu.

Mr. Yilmaz hinted at the beginning of his tenure he would change successive governments' army-only policy in the southeast. He

promised Kurdish education and broadcasting and his government has pledged to lift emergency rule in the region.

But no progress has been made in addressing restrictions on Turkey's Kurdish minority as the government of Motherland and the True Path Party of former Premier Tansu Ciller is near to collapse amid infighting and corruption allegations. Mr. Yilmaz faces a censure motion next week that could kill the government.

But Mr. Geylani said the fact that the issue was being discussed was an improvement on before. "In the end, it will be achieved."

News in Brief

Bahrain urges Qatar to accept arbitration

MANAMA (R) — Bahrain urged Qatar on Friday to withdraw its case before the World Court in the Hague over disputed islands and negotiate a settlement directly with Bahrain or accept Saudi Arabian arbitration. Bahrain and Qatar are locked in a border dispute over a number of barren but potentially oil and gas-rich islands, sand banks and reefs controlled by Bahrain since the 1930s. "Regarding the Qatar-Bahrain border dispute, the best solution, in our view, is direct negotiation between the two brotherly parties to resolve the problem," Crown Prince Sheikh Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa told the Gulf News Agency. Alternatively, Bahrain and Qatar could agree on a Saudi Arabian arbitration under the umbrella of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) which also groups Kuwait, Oman and the United Arab Emirates. "We cannot talk about Saudi arbitration while the case was still with the International Court of Justice (ICJ)," he said. "In our view, the two countries should accept Saudi arbitration with the support of the GCC and that Qatar withdraws the case from the ICJ to pave the way for fruitful arbitration," Sheikh Hamad said. Qatar unilaterally asked the ICJ at the Hague in 1991 to settle the problem. But Bahrain has refused to accept the jurisdiction of the court which decided in January that it had jurisdiction and is expected to produce a verdict this year.

Shots fired at Druze legislator

TEL AVIV (AP) — Using an M-16 assault rifle, two assailants opened fire from a car on a deputy minister in Prime Minister Shimon Peres' cabinet on Friday as he tended his front yard. The politician, Saleh Tarif, a member of Israel's minority Druze sect, dove for cover and was not hit by the burst of eight to 10 shots, said police spokesman Danny Koffler. Two suspects drove off, but were detained shortly afterwards. The shooting occurred at about the same time as the results of Israel's election for prime minister were announced, and the leader of the opposition Likud Party, Benjamin Netanyahu, was declared the winner over Mr. Peres. The shooting incident occurred in the Druze village of Julis in northern Israel. Mr. Tarif, who is a deputy interior minister, is a member of Mr. Peres' Labour Party. Mr. Tarif's cousin, Ali Tarif, said the suspects were both residents of Julis and were supporters of Likud.

Turkey holds municipal polls

ANKARA (AFP) — Some two per cent of the Turkish electorate vote Sunday in municipal elections seen as a key test of the strength of support for the various parties ahead of a crucial confidence vote in parliament. Fifteen parties are vying for votes in four provinces and 37 towns, including the two partners in the fragile right-wing minority government coalition and their main challenger, the Islamic Refah Party. Refah, the largest party in parliament following the December 24 general elections, has put down a censure motion to be debated next week and voted on Friday. If passed it will mean the end of the government of Mesut Yilmaz, head of the Motherland party, which was formed in March in coalition with former Prime Minister Tansu Ciller's True Path Party.

Assad nephew charged in France

PARIS (AFP) — A nephew of Syrian President Hafez Al Assad was Friday charged with hit-and-run driving after an accident here in which two motorcyclists were knocked down and one of them paralysed, judicial officials said. The nephew, Ali Al Assad, 17, was released on conditional bail of 500,000 francs (\$100,000), ordered to surrender his passport and not to leave the country. He is charged with failing to assist a person in danger, fleeing from the scene of an accident, accidental wounding and failing to produce a driving licence, the sources added. Mr. Assad has admitted he was driving the Texas-registered armoured Cadillac car that caused the accident despite the fact he does not have a driving licence. On the night in question, Assad went to a discotheque with another youth of French nationality, who was also charged for not assisting a person in danger and ordered to report to police. Two men were seriously injured in the accident which occurred overnight on June 24.

Yemen, Djibouti sign anti-drug accord

SANAA (AP) — Yemen and Djibouti signed an agreement Friday to prevent illegal fishing and drug smuggling in the territorial waters of the two Red Sea countries, the official Aden radio reported. It said the agreement was signed by Yemen's interior minister, Hussein Mohammed Arab, and his counterpart from Djibouti, Idris Fareh. Last April, Yemen blamed Djibouti for holding 33 sailors — 30 Yemenis and three Somalis — after its navy seized six fishing boats in Djibouti's territorial waters. Red Sea littoral states often complain of illegal fishing in their waters, but drug trafficking is not widespread.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 771111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:00 Cartoon — The Musk
15:30 Mac and Muttley
16:00 Italian Soccer
17:00 Only
17:15 La Vie Devant Moi
17:30 Que Le Meilleur Gagne
18:00 Magazine — Envoy Special
19:00 News in French
19:15 Magazine — Sports Et Musique
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Cinema, Cinema
20:00 The American Chain Show
20:30 Jordanian Armed Forces Band
20:45 Fresh Prince of Bel-Air
21:10 Drama — Black's Magic
22:00 News in English
22:25 The Bold and the Beautiful
23:10 Counterside

PRAYER TIMES

05:33 Fajr
05:29 (Sunrise) Dhuha
12:33 Dhuhr
16:14 Asr
19:41 Maghrib
21:14 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swelleh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel.
632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel.
627440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrasanta Church Tel. 622366

Church of the Annunciation Tel.

623541

Anglican Church Tel. 652026

Armenian Catholic Church Tel.
771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel.
772261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Assyrian International Church Tel.
625256

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel.
624328

German-speaking Evangelical Con-
gregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

The Evangelical Local Church in
Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking

Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614191

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Depart-

ment of Meteorology.

The Kingdom is expected to re-

lative cold air mass for the next 48

hours. So, fine weather conditions

will prevail during the day becoming

cool at night with winds north-

westerly moderate to active. In

Aqaba, winds will be northerly

moderate to active and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman 13 / 25

Aqaba 20 / 32

Deserts 11 / 28

Jordan Valley 18 / 31

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 25, Aqaba 32. Humidity

readings: Amman 37 per cent.

Aqaba 38 per cent.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Nasser Ibrahim 830432

Dr. Bahjat Bader 832642

Dr. Wafiq Qaddumi 893542

Firm pharmacy 661912

Ferdows pharmacy 778336

Al Asma pharmacy 637055

Nairookh pharmacy 623672

Al Salam pharmacy 649448

Shamsi pharmacy 637940

Nairookh pharmacy 623672

Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ghazi Tajammeh 250880

Alquds pharmacy (-)

ZARQA:

Dr. Hmaidan Al Zayoud 911010

Khalil pharmacy 985417

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Alquds pharmacy (-)

Tunis Air chief says tourism should be exploited

AMMAN (Petra) — President of Tunis Air Taher Raees Saturday told the press here that Tunisia seeks to increase its tourist and economic ties with Jordan and believes there is significant potential in these areas that should be exploited on both sides.

Mr. Raees arrived in Amman Saturday at the head of a tourist and economic delegation to inaugurate a direct air route between Tunis and Amman.

He said the opening of the route is designed to increase tourism between both countries.

Mr. Raees added that his country wants to overcome

any obstacles to promoting tourism between Jordan and Tunisia and will facilitate visa application procedures for Jordanians.

The North African country also plans to organise a Tunisia tourist week in Jordan soon to show off its tourism potential, said Mr. Raees.

He said that during his current visit to Jordan he plans to meet with government officials and representatives of Royal Jordanian, the national air carrier, to discuss issues pertaining to direct flights between the two countries.

Mr. Raees said the number of Arab tourists visiting

Tunisia is relatively low compared with foreign visitors from European countries. But he added that the peace era in the Middle East is expected to result in an increase in those numbers.

Tunis Air, he said, has a fleet of 24 Airbus and Boeing aircraft, which annually transport three million passengers. He said plans are to modernise the fleet and open new routes around the world.

Later Mr. Raees met with Minister of Tourism Saleh Irshaidat and said Tunis Air plans to initiate regular flights for Jordanians wishing to visit Tunisia at very

competitive rates to encourage them to visit the country.

Dr. Irshaidat said Jordan attaches great importance to tourism cooperation with Tunisia especially in hotel training fields.

Tunisia's tourism experiment is rich and has been very successful compared with neighbouring countries.

Dr. Irshaidat said there are many areas for Jordanian-Tunisian cooperation in tourism, hotel training fields and joint marketing of Jordanian and Tunisian attractions in foreign countries.

Drownings claim 4 lives

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Four people, including one child, Friday drowned in two separate swimming accidents in the Jordan Valley, Civil Defence Department (CDD) reports said.

Two people, including a 13-year-old youth, were killed after a swimming accident in a pool on a farm in the eastern part of the Jordan Valley.

CDD rescue workers unsuccessfully tried to revive the two victims identified as Ahmad Mohammad Naweisheh, 27, and Mahmoud Suleiman Naweisheh. Both victims were declared dead on arrival at Al Potash Hospital.

Also on Friday in Shuneh, two people drowned in a water reservoir in the Adaseh area, CDD reports said.

Salameh Suleiman, 22, and Omar Juma Mohammad, 11, were rushed to Muath Bin Jabal Hospital but were pronounced dead on arrival.

A CDD official said that drowning incidents are common in the summer when people swim in unauthorised areas.

Meanwhile, Public Security Department (PSD) reports Saturday said that eight people, including three children, were killed in road accidents during the weekend.

In the Marj Al Hamam area, three people, including two children, were killed in a road collision when their car struck an electricity pole, PSD reports said.

The victims were identified by PSD reports as: Nabil Ibrahim, 39, Mohammad Jafar, 3, and his three-month-old brother Loai.

On the Amman-Zarqa-Ruseife Highway, PSD reports said three people were killed and 20 more were injured when the bus they were riding in collided with a trailer.

The deceased were identified as Mohammad Yousef Mohammad, 16, Imad Ahmad Mohammad, 25, and Yahia Abu Hamra, 39.

In Al Kreimeh in the Jordan Valley, a 62-year-old man was killed when the tractor he was driving rolled over and crushed him, PSD reports said. The deceased was identified as Ahmad Hamdan.

A four-year-old boy, identified as Muath Ali, was killed in Ain Janah town in Ajloun after being struck by a vehicle driven by Falah Taher.

Traffic officials said the 27-year-old driver was speeding.

Pakistani MP says republic supports Palestinian rights

AMMAN (Petra) — Visiting Pakistani Parliament Speaker Goth Baksh Saturday said Jordan-Pakistan relations are strong and deep-rooted and that His Majesty King Hussein has demonstrated genuine interest in advancing these relations in several ways to benefit the two Islamic peoples of both countries.

Speaker of the Upper House of Parliament Ahmad Lawzi said that the visit of the Pakistani parliamentary delegation is highly important as it comes during a period in which the Middle East is moving

towards peacemaking — a peace, he added, which cannot be fulfilled without fully restoring the occupied lands in the West Bank, South Lebanon, and the Golan Heights through implementation of international resolutions.

Mr. Lawzi said the peace process does not change according to any change in leadership but rather it is an agreed-upon process between two or more countries, in implied reference to the recent election of Likud party chief Benjamin Netanyahu as prime minister of Israel.

Mr. Baksh said that Pakistan supports the Palestinian question as an Arab issue and considers Jerusalem an Islamic city which should be restored to Muslims.

Later, Mr. Baksh and the accompanying delegation visited the Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) where they were briefed by Executive Director Ibrahim Badran on the duties of the foundation in extending assistance to underprivileged families through the development of income generating projects.

Taxi, service office owners debate new government restriction

By Samir Hijawi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A senior Ministry of Interior official on Saturday said the ministry's recent decision banning trading in taxi and service car licences will be applied only to new taxi offices and will not apply retroactively.

Ministry Secretary General Khamis Abu Sleim said the Central Traffic Committee decided to ban trading in licences to end monopoly and favouritism and to ensure equality among citizens.

Mr. Abu Sleim said the new decision limits the number of taxis owned by each office to enlarge the number of beneficiaries and prevents some people from monopolising the sector.

The committee issued a decision in mid-May in which it considered that the taxi and service car routes are the jurisdiction of the government and cannot be traded by individuals.

The president of the Taxi Offices Owners Association, Abdullah Qaisi, described the ministry's decision as unjust, saying all the taxi offices around the Kingdom are operating in accordance with active laws and regulations and with the approval of the concerned authorities.

Mr. Qaisi said 70 per cent of the owners of public service cars are indebted to banks because of the high prices of the cars. "This decision will lead them to

bankruptcy," said Mr. Qaisi.

Association Secretary Fuad Badri called on the government to repeal "this unjust decision and maintain things as they were before."

He said the association has no objection to granting new taxi offices licences in accordance with the new terms.

Criticising what he termed as moodiness in taking decisions, Mr. Badri said the association was adhering to regulations and called for enacting a new, modern traffic law to stem improvisations in the decision-making processes.

He also called for giving the association representation on the Central Traffic Committee, which, he said, would allow the association to express its views on any measures of concern to taxi drivers and owners.

Meanwhile, taxi drivers and owners continued to express their shock and fury against the recent decision.

Abdul Aziz Mohammad, a taxi driver, said the old regulation on taxis is not sensible, but he described the new decision as outrageous. "I paid JD 16,500 for this car," said Mr. Mohammad, pointing to his car. "The new decision renders it worthless. So who would compensate me for the loss? And how could the government issue a decision to confiscate my money that way?" he asked.

A taxi officer owner said he paid JD 60,000 to buy his office with the

five cars registered there, and added that its ownership was transferred to him through a decision by the minister of interior, and all the other papers were approved by the Central Traffic Committee and the Ministry of Industry and Trade.

The same Ministry of Interior issued "this decision which ruins all I built in my life."

Another driver, Abdul Karim Mashayekh, said this decision deals a severe blow to investment and property rights in the country.

This decision contravenes the Constitution," asserted Mr. Mashayekh, adding that in similar earlier decisions which infringed upon the people's property, the judiciary restored citizens' rights.

Chairman of the association's taxi committee Ahmad Duweileh said the association filed a complaint with the Higher Court of Justice and expressed hope that it will rescind the decision.

The Ministry of Interior secretary general countered by saying that the law gives the minister the right to issue decisions on granting taxi licences based on the economic situation and the market's need. According to the association, there are 15,500 taxis and service cars operating in Jordan.

Prosecution presents material evidence in Bay'at Al Imam sabotage case

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Prosecutors at the State Security Court trial of seven men known as Bay'at Al Imam (pledge of allegiance to the leader), Sunday presented material evidence that the accused were plotting to carry out acts of sabotage.

The seven, part of a group of 13 men, are charged with plotting to carry out extremist attacks and illegal possession and manufacturing of explosive materials.

The remaining six, who are released on bail, are charged with distributing

pamphlets that were slanderous to His Majesty King Hussein. On May 19, the 13 defendants pleaded not guilty to all charges.

Testifying for the prosecution, Second Lieutenant Ali Ensour of the Preventive Security Department of the PSD, said that all the explosives he examined in July of 1994 were "fit to use."

According to Lt. Ensour, the explosives which the prosecutor charged were found with some of the defendants, were four anti-personal mines, four hand grenades, 10 triggers, and nine fuses.

"These explosives are approximately three-years-old and are harmful to human beings," he told the court.

Second Lieutenant Usama Yousef of the Wadi Sir Police Station told the court that he searched the home of the third defendant, Mustafa Hassan Musa Suleiman, in the Jandawil area.

He said the defendant himself led him to two plastic capsules (filled with acetone and oxygen) that were kept on the roof of the defendant's house.

When the defence attorney asked Lt. Yousef

whether or not he had checked the identity of the third defendant before searching his house, the witness said no.

"The security officers who brought the third defendant to the police station informed me that it was Mustafa Musa and that my job was to go and search his house," he said.

Presiding Judge Yousef Faouzi postponed the case for today (Sunday) to hear the remaining three prosecution witnesses in the case.

South Amman residents complain of pollution to farmlands, water

By Ramadan Rawashdeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Citizens and farmers living in Abu Alanda and Wadi Qattar areas south of Amman have raised complaints to the Amman Municipality about pollution to their lands, water and farms resulting from the dumping of waste close to an artesian well that irrigates Al Hussein National Park and surrounding private farmlands.

"The well, which supplies water to the farms and the park at the rate of 70 cubic metres per hour, is now polluted because of the dumping of waste from the stone quarries and sewage and waste water hauled by trucks to this area," according to Tamim Humaiti, an Abu Alanda resident who owns

a farm at Wadi Qattar. Local farmers told the Jordan Times that "the waste water and the sewage dumped in their area has leaked into the underground water reserves and the artesian well causing the contamination and prompting the municipality, which conducted tests on water samples, to stop the well water from being pumped to the farmlands."

A senior official at the Amman Municipality, Falah Emoush, told the Jordan Times that the tests were actually conducted at the laboratories of the Royal Scientific Society and the University of Jordan but declined to reveal their results.

However other municipality sources confirmed that the well water was polluted with a high con-

tent of sulphur and sewage, which can cause diarrhoea and other ailments and diseases but not affect the trees in the park.

Mr. Emoush admitted that some trucks which carried the sewage from the cesspools and residue and blood from the Amman Slaughterhouse dumped their cargo in the site with the permission of the municipality which later stopped the procedure pending an examination of the situation.

Mr. Humaiti warned that the pollution of the underground water in that area might affect the water basins in the Amman and Zarqa governorates if the dumping is allowed to continue.

Local farmers told the Jordan Times that the artesian well usually supplies eight water towers with

water which irrigate several thousand dunums of land planted with trees.

Meanwhile a report in Al Ra'i Arabic daily Saturday said the Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) board has assigned a 200 dunum plot of state-owned land west of Deir Alla in the Jordan Valley to be used as a waste dump.

The report said that a private sector investor has offered to set up a waste treatment plant at the cost of JD 5 million in the Jordan Valley to recycle the treated matter and the bid was welcomed by the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment which seeks to curtail pollution.

Spanning contemporary Spanish art: 'From Picasso to Our Present Day'

By Mahmoud I. Mufti
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — "From Picasso to Our Present Day," the title of the exhibition currently on display at Darat Al Funun, somehow does not resonate with the same verve, mystique and sense of occasion as does the original Spanish form "De Picasso A Nuestros Dias." Pablo aside, what's the connection precisely? Well, this exhibition originates from the Museo Del Grabado Español Contemporáneo in Marbella, Spain (The Spanish Contemporary Engravings Museum of Marbella).

Featured are 38 of Spain's finest contemporary artists, "collectively covering every major artistic movement of the 20th century, ranging from the academic school of art to absolute abstraction," explains the Dara's director, artist Ali Maher.

The range in-between includes cubism, futurism, Dadaism, surrealism, expressionism, abstract expressionism, impressionism, symbolism, academic realism, calligraphy, informal art, and general abstract art.

Equally thoroughly represented are the various known printing techniques: etching (copper or zinc-based), xilography (wood-based), linoleum printing, lithography (stone-based) and serigraphy (silk screen).

Claiming the most immediate name-recognition in the exhibition would have to be Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dalí, Joan Miró and Antoni Tàpies, although those who successfully completed their 101 Modern Art course would at this instant be recalling other greats like Vicente Arnas, José Caballero, Rafael Canogar, Luis Canuncho, Eugenio Chicano, Luis García Ochoa, Juan Genovés and Gerardo Rueda.

To find out who in Spain's contemporary art scene accounts for the remainder of the 38 participating artists, a trip to the breathtakingly beautiful Dara (especially this time of year) would no doubt put to rest all pangs of curiosity.

"The exhibition is very important because it represents the history of [Spanish] graphic art throughout the 20th century starting from Picasso to the present

day", Suba Shoman of Darat Al Funun told the Jordan Times on opening night, referring to the movements that collectively account for the dynamic changes that have characterised art this century.

One of Picasso's works on exhibit "Amores de Jupiter y Selene," for instance, is an etching of the Vollard-Suite series. The latter embodies a type of etching used for sly comments, parodies, double-takes and experiments... a sanctuary for wit and... bold carelessness. (Timothy Hilton: "Picasso").

Salvador Dalí's style, as well as that of Joan Miró, are surrealistic — albeit vastly different. Yet the common belief that surrealism is an artistic style or an aesthetic doctrine in quite erroneous.

It is "an attitude to life, a sort of religion, that if understood and accepted would bring about, it was believed, the economic and spiritual liberation of man... [it is] romantic rather than classical in spirit, putting qualities of passion, intuition, and feeling above reason, harmony and order." (Alan Bowness: "Modern European Art").

The predominating feature in all the exhibited works is the artistic technique employed; etching.

Until relatively recently, the art world had more or less belittled the latter and relegated it to the status of secondary importance or, at best, as anecdotal to mainstream graphic methods. Contributing to this scornful outlook was the perceived ease of its application. However, considerable skill, patience and care are needed to satisfactorily produce even the simplest of images. According to expert graphics artist Melanie Brittain of Santa Fe, New Mexico, the etching process begins with a "highly-polished, backed, copper or zinc plate which has been coated with melted wax. The artist's image is sketched through the wax, exposing a metal line. The plate is then placed into an acid bath which eats away at the exposed line. Afterwards, the wax coating is removed with solvent."

What follows is a process known as "inking," whereby etching ink is allowed to smear the plate, usually achieved by rolling. The

etched lines, by virtue of their furrows in the wax, retain the most ink. Excess ink, however, can ruin the effect and must swiftly be wiped with "a special cheesecloth called tarlatan," explains Ms. Brittain.

When it comes to the actual printing, the plate is placed on the bed of the press with heavy-grade moistened paper atop. Between the plate and paper and the press's metal roller are three felt blankets. Then, as the artist elaborates, "thousands of pounds-per-inch force the ink out of the deep etched lines onto (and into) the paper... and voila! an etching!"

Shadowing can be obtained by etched cross-hatching or by a process called aqua-tinting. (The latter) begins by melting a fine sprinkling of rosin on the etched plate. This creates an evenly random, almost microscopic dot pattern. Desired lighter areas are systematically blocked out as the plate is submerged in a weaker acid solution for longer and longer periods of time until the darkest shade is obtained. Time, familiarity and



Juan Genovés's strong contrasts depict fleeing men

changing perceptions subsequently collaborated to lend it (i.e., etching) legitimacy, so that it started occupying a niche all its own alongside other established abstract art schools.

Artists increasingly started to appreciate the technical freedom this method accorded them and its conduciveness to self-expression. Accordingly, this form of art, etching, came

to represent a yardstick against which the artistic development of the painter would later be evaluated.

Jordan's first graphics printing machine was donated by the U.S. embassy to the National Gallery of Fine Arts, and has now been on loan to Darat Al Funun's graphics section.

The exhibition, running till June 6, included a clas-

sical Spanish music concert by La Maestranza and a lecture-series by Jordanian Plastic Arts Association President Dr. Khalid Khreis. It is co-organised by the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation and the Instituto Cervantes in Amman.

The exhibition was inaugurated by Their Majesties Queen Noor and Queen Sofia of Spain.

Polls put ruling party ahead as Czech vote closes

PRAGUE (AFP) — Exit polls put the ruling centre-right party of Prime Minister Vaclav Klaus ahead, as expected, Saturday as voting ended in the Czech Republic's third democratic election since the fall of communism in 1989.

If confirmed the result makes the Czech Republic the only Central European country not to see former Communists returned to power in states they once ruled as allies of the Soviet Union.

Polling stations closed at 2:00 p.m. (1200 GMT) and first estimates based on exit polls were published shortly afterwards.

Mr. Klaus's Civic Democratic Party (ODS) won 32.5 per cent of the vote, according to an exit poll conducted by the private television station Nova.

It said the party's main rival, the Social-Democratic Party (CSSD) of Milos Zeman, won 22.5 per cent.

The CSSD had emerged as a credible alternative to the right after a campaign which played on the hardship caused by free-market economic reforms though had a tough fight against the government's record of steady growth and low unemployment.

Mr. Klaus's ODS had been widely tipped to win the poll which saw some 7.9 million voters eligible to cast ballots in 15,000 polling stations under a system of proportional representation.

President Vaclav Havel, casting his ballot when polling stations opened Friday, declared the elections "a festival of democracy."

"I tried all my life to reach this point," said Mr. Havel, a former anti-Communist dissident.

He said there was "political calm" for the vote, the third legislative ballot since democracy returned to Czechoslovakia, formed under the Treaty of Versailles at the end of World War I and broken up into the Czech Republic and Slovakia on Jan. 1, 1993.

A total of 16 parties were vying for support, but only six are likely to gain the five per cent or more needed for representation in the 200-seat parliament.

Expected to win seats alongside the two heavyweight parties are the communist party of Bohemia-Moravia (KSCM), the two centre-right parties allied with the ODS in the government, the Christian Democrat Union

(KDU-CSL) and the Civic Democratic Alliance (ODA), and the extreme-right Republican Party (SPR-RSC).

The outgoing conservative coalition led by the ODS also includes the Democratic Alliance (ODA) of Deputy Prime Minister Jan Kalvoda and the Christian Democrats (KDU-CSL) of Agriculture Minister Jan Lux.

The Nova poll gave the KSCM 10 per cent of the vote, the SPR-RSC and the KDU-CSL 7.5 per cent, and the ODA 5.5 per cent.

Mr. Klaus's campaign focused on the Czech Republic's five per cent economic growth rate, unemployment running at just three per cent, two consecutive budget surpluses, a widely-emulated coupon privatisation plan and the full convertibility of the currency, the crown.

However, the failure of efforts to reform the health service, which sparked a doctors' strike, discontent among farmers over imports of subsidised produce, the impact of higher prices on pensions and wages, and rising crime and "profiteering" from the privatisation process had eroded some of the government's support.

Bangladeshi Electoral Court summons opposition leader for code violation

DHAKA (AFP) — A Bangladeshi district electoral enquiry court has summoned Awami League party chief Sheikh Hasina Wajed or her representative to face charges that she violated poll codes, officials confirmed here Saturday.

The court in north-eastern Sylhet will hear the case on June 4 after charges were brought by a local leader from the rival Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) of former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, they said.

The Bangladesh daily newspaper reported that the judge asked Mrs. Hasina or her representative to respond to allegations that she violated the election code of conduct during recent campaign speeches in the district.

Mrs. Hasina was accused of announcing at a May 14 campaign rally in Sylhet that, if her party was elected, Sylhet Airport would be made an international airport, the report said.

Making new commitments after elections are called is an offence under the election code.

This is the second such summons against top political leaders ahead of the June 12 parliamentary elections. A court in northern

Mymensingh district earlier asked BNP chief Khaleda Zia to defend herself against similar charges on June 3.

Party officials said both Mrs. Khaleda and Mrs. Hasina will be represented by party officials at the courts, which could impose jail terms up to seven years if the charges were proved.

Both Mrs. Khaleda and Mrs. Hasina are campaigning across the country ahead of the crucial June 12 elections for 300 parliamentary seats under a caretaker government headed by former Chief Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman.

In a related development, the autonomous Election Commission said it had warned 48 candidates found guilty of violating the election code of conduct.

The autonomous commission is trying for the first time to strictly enforce the election code, which includes limits on candidate spending and bans provocative statements or wall writings against rivals.

Some 2,570 candidates, both independents and representatives of 81 political parties, are campaigning for 300 seats in the one-day polls in which 56 million are eligible to vote.

9 more die in Kwazulu-Natal province amid hopes for peace

DURBAN, South Africa (AFP) — Nine people were murdered in the 24 hours up to Saturday morning in troubled Kwazulu-Natal province, police said, despite rising hopes for an end to political violence here.

The deaths included three teenagers who were killed late Friday when unknown gunmen entered their home in Mandini north of this port city and begun firing indiscriminately, police said in a statement.

In another attack at Donnybrook in the central part of Kwazulu-Natal, a candidate in the June 26 local government elections was murdered by three masked gunmen.

Mandlezizwe Mbanjwa, 30, was standing for President Nelson Mandela's ruling African National Congress (ANC) that is facing a tough campaign against its major rival, the Zulu-nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), in the poll.

Mbanjwa's death brought to nine the number of candidates who have been murdered since campaigning began in February.

Close to 20,000 people have died since 1985 in an undeclared civil war between ANC and IFP supporters in the province that is run by an IFP-dominated government.

The latest killings came as a task group appointed by Mandela said Friday that political temperatures in the province have cooled, fuelling hope that predictions of a bloody poll might not be fulfilled.

Task group Chairman Chris Fisser, at a

press conference here, praised ANC and IFP leaders for launching a new peace initiative that he said could help defuse the conflict.

Churches in the province have also invited Mr. Mandela, IFP leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi and Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini to a multi-party peace summit on June 13.

Mr. Fisser said that recent security force reports suggested the province was on the mend but, he added, "we don't say there will be no incidents at all ... we don't attempt to portray that we have arrived in paradise."

Around 4,000 additional police personnel and up to six extra army companies will be deployed in the province during the election, Fisser said.

Voters will go to the polls on June 26 to choose new municipal councils for villages, towns and cities throughout Kwazulu-Natal, home to eight million Zulus — South Africa's largest single ethnic group.

Democratic local elections were held in most parts of South Africa in November but were postponed in Cape town and parts of the surrounding Western Cape, as well as Kwazulu-Natal, because of political disputes.

Western Cape voters went to the polls Wednesday while the Kwazulu-Natal elections were moved to June so that violence could be brought under control and administrative problems resolved.

Clinton accuser in Whitewater trial jailed

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (R) — The prosecution's star witness in the just-finished Whitewater trial began serving a 28-month prison sentence Friday for defrauding a federal agency.

David Hale, who accused President Bill Clinton, then governor of Arkansas, of pressuring him to make an illegal \$300,000 loan in 1986, checked into a minimum-security federal prison in Fort Worth, Texas, officials said.

Prison spokesman Betty Taylor said Mr. Hale would undergo a week of "routine screening, including a medical exam," then join the inmate population.

Mr. Hale pleaded guilty to two counts of defrauding the Small Business Administration when he ran a federally backed investment company. He got the 23-month sentence as part of a plea bargain agreement with federal prosecutors in exchange for his testimony in the Whitewater trial.

Defendants James McDougal, his ex-wife, Susan McDougal, and Arkansas Gov. Jim Guy Tucker were found guilty Tuesday

of multiple counts of fraud related to a mid-1980s scheme involving federally backed financial institutions.

Mr. Hale said he gave out many illegal loans, including one of \$300,000 to Susan McDougal, part of which allegedly went to the troubled Whitewater real estate venture in which the McDougals and Mr. Clinton and his wife, Hillary, were partners.

Mr. Clinton, in videotaped testimony, denied Mr. Hale's allegations that he pressured him to make the loan.

One juror in the trial said the 12-member jury considered Mr. Hale an "unmitigated liar" but convicted the three defendants because of a "paper trail" that showed illegal deals.

Senate Whitewater Committee Chairman Alfonse D'Amato, a Republican from New York, wants Mr. Hale to testify before the committee. Mr. Hale refused an earlier request to appear on grounds that he might incriminate himself.

Mr. Hale still faces felony state charges in Arkansas.

2 killed as Chinese police battle separatists

BEIJING (R) — A policeman and a Muslim separatist were shot dead in a gunbattle this week in China's restive western region of Xinjiang, state media said.

The shootout was the latest in a series of violent clashes and political killings reported in recent weeks by state media and officials in China's mainly Muslim frontier region.

Separatists wanted for an attack on a Muslim leader and government advisor shot dead one police officer and injured another after being challenged by a police unit on May 27, the China News Service said.

"The police managed to confine the two suspects to a marsh where the two criminals in desperation fired," it said. "One of the criminals was shot dead on the spot and his wounded accomplice was caught."

Local officials in Xinjiang told Reuters this week that Muslim activists had stabbed and injured Aronghan Aji, a religious leader and member of regional and national government advisory bodies.

Aronghan Aji's son was also badly wounded in the attack and both were now in "fair" condition in hospital, China News Service said. It gave no other details.

The knifing of the 73-year-old mullah was the latest in a series of assassinations and attacks reported on cadres and pro-Communist religious leaders in the Xinjiang region.

An underground group of "splittists" based in the regional capital Urumqi had killed six or seven people and injured four since February, a local official in the region's western Toksu county said by telephone Monday.

Government leaders fighting to curb the campaign of political killings have banned the construction of new mosques and tightened controls on religion in Xinjiang, local officials have said.

The news of separatist killings in Xinjiang has come amid a slew of reports of political discontent in neighbouring Tibet.

A Chinese court sentenced six Tibetans to up to five years in prison for demanding independence for the Himalayan region, Tibet Television said in a report monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation and seen in Beijing Friday.

A court in Tibet's second largest city of Xigaze announced the sentences against the six at a recent rally, it said.



One of four wounded police officers is taken to hospital after a lone gunman went on a five-hour shooting spree in the Northern Territory township of Palmerston, south of Darwin on June 1. Four police officers and a civilian were wounded by the 23-year-old gunman with a pump-action shotgun before he was taken into custody (Reuters photo)

Australian gunman on rampage wounds 5

SYDNEY (R) — Four police officers and a civilian were injured early Saturday when a man firing a pump-action shotgun went on a five-hour shooting spree near Darwin, police said.

The man was later wounded and captured, they said.

Police said the gunman, in his early 20s, first shot a female officer and a policeman who had responded to reports of shots being fired around midnight Friday near a house at Palmerston, 20 kilometres south of Darwin.

A civilian at the scene was also shot.

Police said the man left the scene and reappeared about five hours later at Palmerston Police Station where he opened fire, injuring two policemen as they entered the building.

An exchange of gunfire followed in which police managed to subdue the man as he fired from a culvert.

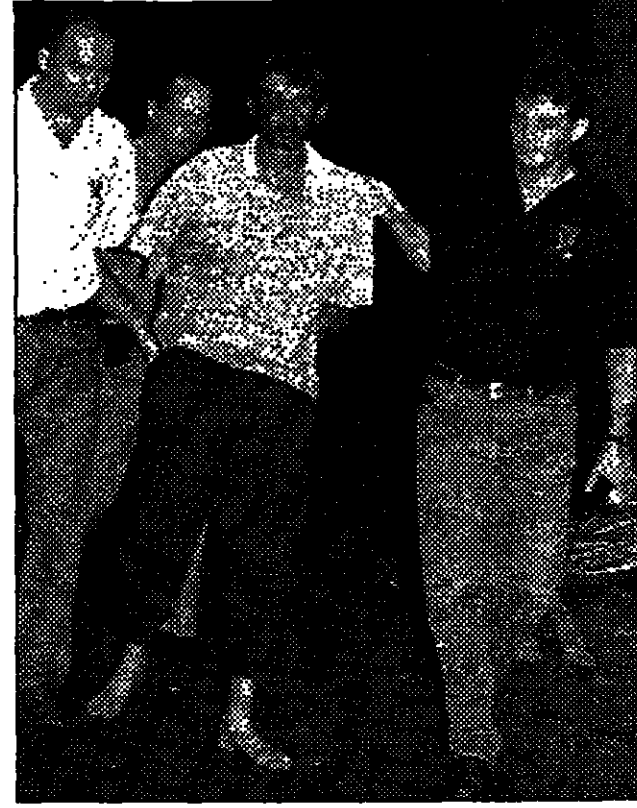
Police said the man was being treated in hospital for a bullet wound to the arm. He had not yet been charged.

A police spokesman said the condition of three of the officers and the civilian was satisfactory, while the fourth police officer had superficial injuries.

"Clearly this was an extremely dangerous situation. It had the potential to escalate much further," Darwin Police Commander Bob Fields told reporters.

Meanwhile tens of thousands of Australians took to the streets Saturday in the largest mass rally since the Vietnam War to protest proposed new gun control laws.

A proposed crackdown on semi- and semi-automatic



An alleged unidentified gunman (centre) is led by police upon his arrest on June 1 (Reuters photo)

guns had been agreed by Australia's federal and state governments after the massacre of 35 people by a gunman at Port Arthur, in the southern state of Tasmania, on April 28.

In Melbourne, police said at least 60,000 people marched on the state parliament to rally against tougher gun laws.

But the Sporting Shooter's Association of Australia (SSAA), which organised the rally, estimated the crowd at 100,000.

Either way, the protest march would have been one of the biggest seen in Australia since the Vietnam War.

"We didn't do anything, but we've been sentenced,

convicted, the penalty's been imposed on us and there appears to be nothing we can do about it," SSAA President Ted Drane told the rally.

"There's plenty we can do about it. The first thing we can do is tell these people here (at state parliament), 'are we going to wear it? No, we're not going to wear it'."

An anti-gun rally in Brisbane, meanwhile, drew about 200 people while an anti-gun vigil for Port Arthur victims in Melbourne drew about 50.

However, opinion polls show the vast majority of Australians in favour of stricter gun controls.

Thousands rally at Aung San Suu Kyi's house; 100 activists released

RANGOON (AFP) — Thousands of people rallied outside the home of Burmese opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi Saturday, as the ruling junta released 100 party activists from detention.

Some 4,000 people gathered outside Aung San Suu Kyi's lakeside home to hear her outline the political and economic aims of her National League for Democracy (NLD) following a key pro-democracy meeting last week.

The Nobel Peace Prize winner also told the cheering crowd that the party had confirmed that more than 100 of the 262 NLD activists detained last week ahead of the meeting had been released.

NLD Vice Chairman Tin Oo told AFP that all but a handful of the detained activists had reportedly been freed, but that the party was awaiting confirmation from more remote districts across the country.

But, he said, "we are concerned that some of the people will be detained for quite a time," particularly Win Htein, a senior aide to Aung San Suu Kyi, and her press secretary Aye Win.

Mr. Tin Oo said that Mr. Win Htein was due to be charged Wednesday under Burma's draconian public security laws.

Aung San Suu Kyi and diplomats here have voiced concern that the authorities could take advantage of the detentions to impose long prison terms on senior NLD members picked up in the sweep.

Saturday's address was the first time that Aung San Suu Kyi had announced to the public her party's plans, which include a new constitution and an economic package decided upon at the party congress last week.

"We are going to increase the party's momentum, as is our right," she told the crowds of cheering supporters.

Saturday's meeting, while well attended, was slightly smaller than the 5,000 who came on May 25 and the 10,000 who showed up on May 26.

The NLD's decision to hold the meeting, the first in a series of party congresses, has met with a constant stream of attacks in the official media against Aung San Suu Kyi and the opposition.

Opposition activists have been blasted as "destructionists" in the pay of foreign governments seeking to destabilise the state, a charge that Aung San Suu Kyi has called "paranoid."

"The activities of our party are not meant to attack or criticise anybody, they are merely the legitimate activities of a registered political party," she said.

"It's a kind of mental illness, this paranoia, that makes the government think that everyone is out to destroy them," she told her supporters.

The official press has reported an endless stream of pro-government rallies taking place across the country in the past week, with tens of thousands of people turning out to denounce the "destructionists."

Analysts here say the rallies, which many participants say they are forced to attend, came in response to the huge crowds which gathered outside Aung San Suu Kyi's house last weekend.

The releases, which were announced in the local press, are being seen as an effort by the junta to return to the situation that existed before the detentions brought massive press coverage and focused international attention on Burma.

"Unless something big happens, things will return to normal, which means going back to their systematic harassment of NLD members across the country," one analyst said.

A number of foreign governments have denounced the detentions, and the United States, which has long pressured the junta to clean up its human rights record, has been binting at imposing sanctions on Burma.

Nancy Reagan recovering from pneumonia

LOS ANGELES (R) — Former U.S. President Ronald Reagan's wife Nancy is recovering from a bout with viral pneumonia and has been advised by doctors not to travel, her spokeswoman said Friday. Joanne Drake said Mrs. Reagan, 72, would be unable to attend an anti-drug conference next week in Washington, but that the illness was not life-threatening. "She is doing better, but the doctors do not want her to travel," she said. However, Mrs. Reagan had not been confined to bed during the illness, which she had been unable to shake for two to three weeks, Mrs. Drake said. Ex-President Reagan, who suffers from Alzheimer's disease, still goes to his office daily from the couple's home in the upscale Bel Air section of Los Angeles. He regularly plays golf, Mrs. Drake said. The former first lady, who championed anti-drug efforts while in the White House with her "just say no" campaign, was scheduled to participate in next Wednesday's "substance abuse and the American woman" conference in Washington. Another former president's wife, Betty Ford, and her daughter, Susan, will take part in the conference.

Woman attacked by cosmetic-loving bees

BEIJING (R) — A woman in the central China province of Anhui narrowly escaped death after she was attacked by thousands of bees attracted to her face cream, the official Xinhua News Agency reported Saturday. The agency said the woman, living on the outskirts of Hefei city, had just washed her face and put on the cream when she tried to brush a single bee off her head. A huge bee swarm attacked her, and she was rushed to hospital with her face and head badly swollen. The agency quoted a bee keeper as saying that bees are very responsive to cosmetics.

Chinese officials raid nightclub to free tiger

HONG KONG (R) — A tiger kept in a revolving cage to entice party-goers to a nightclub in the southern Chinese boomtown of Shenzhen has been freed by local authorities, an animal rights campaigner said Saturday. Dengdeng, a one-year-old tiger whose claws were removed by club owners, was confiscated in a raid by authorities after they found the disco did not have a licence to keep the animal. A sign outside the disco had dared passers-by to come inside to "dance" with the animal which was prodded to make it move to the music, Jill Robinson, Asia representative with the International Fund for Animal Welfare, told Reuters. Ms. Robinson, based in the British colony of Hong Kong, said the tiger would probably be put in a zoo or one of three big safari parks opened in China. "Sadly, it cannot be released into the wild because it no longer has claws, or presumably teeth," she said. "Club owners using these animals for entertainment take away their defences and then tell the public 'look how brave you are being so close to this wild animal'. It's extremely cruel and extremely painful for the animal concerned." Earlier this year, China's official Xinhua News Agency reported that the endangered South China tiger would be given greater protection. People keeping wild animals would need permit from the Ministry of Forestry. The tiger, with the giant panda and the crested ibis, is one of the most endangered species in the world, Xinhua said.



A Russian Interior Ministry officer, who was wounded during a land mine explosion, is put on top of an armoured personnel carrier near the village of Bamut (Reuters photo)

Deve Gowda becomes new Indian premier; promises reforms

NEW DELHI (R) — H.D. Deve Gowda was sworn in as India's 12th prime minister Saturday at the head of a 21-member centre-left council of ministers and immediately pledged to press forward with free-market economic reforms.

President Shankar Dayal Sharma administered the oath of office to the 63-year-old leader from the southern state of Karnataka, who became the third prime minister in as many weeks following general elections which led to a hung parliament.

Mr. Deve Gowda succeeded Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who resigned on May 28 after only 12 days in office when it became clear his right-wing Hindu nationalist government could not win a vote of confidence.

Vajpayee's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) emerged as the biggest single party in the lower house of parliament, pushing the Congress Party of former Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao into second place.

But Mr. Deve Gowda's United Front alliance and Congress, which together control some 328 votes in the 535-strong Lok Sabha, or lower house, agreed to join forces against the BJP, which its opponents claim has an anti-Muslim bias.

Mr. Deve Gowda, a regional leader from peasant stock with no experience in the federal government, told reporters after the swearing-in ceremony that he would seek a vote of confidence on June 10, two days before a deadline set by the president.

The new prime minister, who built a reputation as a business-friendly chief minister of Karnataka state, promised that trailblazing economic reforms launched by Mr. Rao would continue.

"My stand is clear from the day I occupied the chair of the chief minister of Karnataka. From that day I stood with the former Prime Minister (Rao), who is the author of the new economic reforms," Mr. Deve Gowda told reporters.

While Mr. Deve Gowda has supported liberalisation, the outlook for further market-opening economic reforms has been clouded by differences within the disparate United Front, which ranges from free-trade advocates to Communists.

Communist leaders were sceptical about Mr. Deve Gowda's promise of sustained reforms.

"What reforms?" said Harkishan Singh Surjeet, general secretary of the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M). "Wait for the new government to settle down. Then we'll see," he said. The CPI-M is part of the alliance but has refused to join the government.

The head of the formerly pro-Soviet Communist Party of India (CPI), Indrajit Gupta, cautioned against reading too much into Mr. Deve Gowda's remarks as he sat down for tea with Mr. Sharma, Mr. Vajpayee and Mr. Rao.

"These are general remarks," Mr. Gupta said. "The government has to go deep into the issues before coming to a decision."

Mr. Deve Gowda had anticipated the problems.

"There are some differences (within the United Front)," he said. "We will sort them out."

The new prime minister, not a member of parliament, must win a seat within six months.

His 21-strong council of ministers included three Muslims, one woman and a Sikh. Low Hindu castes and southern states were strongly represented, reflecting their importance within the United Front.

The ministers' portfolios were expected to be announced later Saturday.

Among the 13 cabinet ministers were P. Chidambaram, commerce minister under Narasimha Rao and a free-trade advocate, and Mulayam Singh Yadav, former chief minister of India's most populous state, Uttar Pradesh.

One of the government's first tasks will be to prepare a federal budget, which will give a clear signal on the direction of economic policy.

United Front spokesman Jaipal Reddy said Friday that the budget covering the 1996/97 financial year which began on April 1 would be presented in six weeks time. Parliament traditionally begins its monsoon session in the first week of July.

Albania's Berisha says polls were not rigged

TIRANA (R) — Albanian President Sali Berisha has rejected claims the country's third general elections were rigged and criticised opposition parties for withdrawing from the poll.

"I would like to assure my friends (in the world) that democracy is a very central and vital factor in Albanian society," Mr. Berisha told Reuters in an interview late Friday.

Mr. Berisha's ruling Democratic Party won a landslide victory with 67.8 per cent of direct votes in the first round on May 26, surpassing the 62 per cent it won in the last elections in 1992. A second round is to be held Sunday.

Albanian opposition parties, including the Key Socialist, pulled out of the ex-Communist country's elections, citing irregularities that were also noted by European observers.

Mr. Berisha pledged his ruling Democratic Party would press on with market reforms and improve the judicial system to safeguard further human rights in the small Balkan nation.

"There will be no slowing down (of the reforms) but we shall do our best to consolidate the rule of law and the market economy," said Mr. Berisha after the third multi-party parliamentary vote in Albania since Stalinist rule collapsed in 1990.

Mr. Berisha said the opposition boycott of the vote had created a "dangerous situation" in Albania, which over the past four years had been a model of stability in the troubled Balkans.

"They had no reason to boycott the elections but I am sure I will have a constructive dialogue with them (in the future), because I am convinced they will play a very important role," Mr. Berisha said.

The Albanian leader said his party would prove the election had not been manipulated. He added the Central Electoral Commission, in charge of the poll, was still closely reviewing the procedures.

The commission has already acknowledged irregularities and annulled the vote in three constituencies, but this was unlikely to satisfy opposition leaders.

Most opposition parties, including the main Socialist Party of reformed Communists, pulled out midway through voting after claiming widespread manipulation of the vote by the Democrats.

Riot police quashed an opposition rally Tuesday, beating most senior opposition figures, prompting calls for calm from the United States and Europe.

Russia accuses Chechen rebels of violating ceasefire

SHALI, Russia (AFP) — The Russian military Saturday accused the Chechen rebels of violating a ceasefire only hours after it was supposed to take effect and the breakaway republic appeared to be sliding back into war.

A spokesman for the Russian command, quoted by Interfax News Agency, said a large number of separatist rebels tried to attack units of a motorised rifle brigade from the rear in Shuani village, in Nozhai Yurt district.

"The (Russian) soldiers had to open fire on the assailants. There are no reports about losses. A firefight is now going on at the motorised rifle brigade's positions," the spokesman said.

In an accord signed in the Kremlin Monday President Boris Yeltsin and Chechen rebel leader Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev had agreed that a ceasefire would take effect from midnight (2000 GMT) Friday.

But shortly before the ceasefire deadline Russian troops and rebels clashed in the southeastern town of Shali and further peace talks set for Saturday in the neighbouring Russian Republic of Dagestan were postponed indefinitely.

The Chechen rebels threatened renewed fighting throughout Chechnya as local officials tried to prevent further clashes in Shali, some 35 kilometres southeast of the capital Grozny.



A Russian Interior Ministry officer, who was wounded during a land mine explosion, is operated on in a field hospital near the village of Bamut (Reuters photo)

Rebel spokesman Movladi Udugov said that if Moscow fulfilled its plans to hold parliamentary elections in Chechnya on June 16, the same day as Russian presidential polls, "it would mean a resumption of military operations throughout Chechnya."

More than 30,000 people, mostly civilians, have died in the war, triggered by a massive Russian military intervention in December 1994 aimed at crushing the Chechen independence bid.

Extra Russian troops moved into position Saturday on the outskirts of Shali, reinforcing a blockade of the town imposed early Friday.

Early Saturday a delegation of local Chechen officials went to the Russian military camp on the edge of Shali to hold talks with General Vladimir Shamanov, deputy commander of Russian troops in the breakaway north Caucasus republic.

Delegation members told that they wanted to convince the Russian commander that there were no longer any rebels in the town, and also wanted an explanation for numerous arrests carried out by Russian troops in Shali and surrounding villages Friday.

Interfax said Nikolai Koshman, prime minister in the pro-Moscow Grozny government, also went to Shali to negotiate with the Russian command there.

The Russian troops surrounding Shali, a town of some 30,000 inhabitants, continued sealing it off to force the separatists to give guarantees that they would respect the ceasefire, not disrupt the planned June 16 elections, and hand over weapons, the civilian authorities in the town said.

The accord signed in Moscow envisaged the abolition of the systematic checks imposed by Russian forces on roads in Chechnya.

In Grozny one Russian soldier was killed and three were wounded in attacks by the Chechen separatists in the past 24 hours, the Russian military command said. It was not clear whether the attacks took place before or after the ceasefire took effect.

The pro-Russian Chechen government meanwhile said three Russian soldiers were killed, and the rebels put the death toll at 10.

A local Chechen rebel commander

was also killed.

Vyacheslav Tikhomirov, the Russian commander in Chechnya, accused the rebels of "deliberately violating the ceasefire accord."

He said the Russian command had halted military operations unilaterally since Monday but federal troops had come under fire 19 times in the same period, and suffered three killed and eight wounded. A helicopter was also shot down and an armoured vehicle destroyed, he said.

The peace talks in Dagestan, which borders on Chechnya, were to have focused on a mechanism for implementing the ceasefire and an exchange of all prisoners held by both sides within two weeks, according to Russian officials.

Russia Wednesday capped the ceasefire accord by offering broader powers of autonomy to the republic, but said a draft treaty outlining those powers would be signed with the pro-Moscow Chechen government and not negotiated with the separatists.

The rebels Saturday rejected any treaties signed between Russia and pro-Moscow Chechen leader Doku Zavgayev.

"No treaty signed by the puppet government with Moscow will be understood by the Chechen people," Mr. Udugov said.

Russia: 'New reality' agreed for European security

VIENNA (R) — Russia said Friday it had agreed a "new reality" for European security in a deal with the United States allowing new arms ceilings for countries to emerge from the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

But some European nations, especially Norway and Turkey, had yet to back a package of proposals to resolve key problems with the 1990 Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) pact.

Delegates from 30 nations, including most of Europe, the United States and Canada, prolonged negotiations at a CFE review conference in Vienna which was due to end Friday to consider the U.S.-Russia deal.

"Russia and the United States have made an agreement... We hope to persuade our friends and partners to follow suit," Russian Deputy Foreign Minister George Mamedov told a news conference.

"It is a new reality. There is no more confrontation between East and West but a period of cooperation," he said.

Mr. Mamedov did not go into specific details on the whole package but added: "It is about new ceilings for new independent countries to come from the Soviet Union."

All the independent states, such as Georgia and Armenia, had the right to

certain allocations, Mr. Mamedov said, hinting that the numbers of arms allowed would be raised.

He said Russia would go on reducing its arsenal but would have a further three years to meet limits, apparently clearing Moscow's technical violation of the CFE pact which required arms cut quotas to have been met by Nov. 17 last year.

Just before the 1995 deadline, Moscow announced it could not meet its treaty obligations because it feared that a reduced military might on its frontiers would ruin its defence capabilities. It was particularly concerned about its southern flank near the troubled Caucasus region.

Washington may put pressure on its European allies to accept the package, handing Russian President Boris Yeltsin a "new European security deal" to satisfy the military ahead of the presidential election on June 16, a diplomatic source said.

Russia had argued for changes to "flank limitations" — the term used in the treaty to refer to the amount of arms a signatory nation is allowed to station on its borders.

NATO states, including a reluctant Turkey, acknowledged two years ago that the treaty had to be modified

because Moscow's borders had changed since it signed the treaty.

The U.S.-Russia package included a fresh commitment from Moscow to cut its arsenal east of the Urals, a pledge not included in the CFE treaty.

In an attempt to go some way towards meeting Russia's reservations, U.S. President Bill Clinton said last year the CFE was designed to be flexible and a modernisation was possible without reducing the national security of any signatory nation.

Asked about the apparent concerns of European nations such as Norway and Turkey, Mr. Mamedov said the package was agreed late Thursday and delegates needed time to consider the details.

"There is a natural aversion to something being presented just before midnight," he said.

"There is a psychological barrier. Neither the Turks nor the Norwegians want to see (arms) allocations being raised because of geographical and political changes," Mr. Mamedov said.

"There is no danger to their security," he said he did not discuss the proposed eastward expansion of NATO with the head of the U.S. delegation, Under-Secretary of State Lynn Davies.

Dole wants to balance U.S. budget in 4 years

CINCINNATI (R) — Presumptive Republican presidential nominee Bob Dole, boosting his credentials as a deficit hawk, suggested Friday he wanted to balance the federal budget in four years, two years faster than proposed by President Bill Clinton.

In an interview with CBS Television affiliates during a campaign swing through Ohio, Sen. Dole made clear that his first priority if elected president would be an attack on the nearly \$150-billion annual U.S. budget deficit.

Although Sen. Dole has made a career of fighting the deficit, doubts about his continued commitment to that goal have been fanned by reports that he is considering proposing hefty tax cuts to help resuscitate his flagging presidential campaign.

"I would send a balanced budget, a legislative balanced budget to Congress following on the path we are now on," Sen. Dole told the broadcasters.

The Kansas Republican, who will retire from the Senate by June 11 to campaign full time for the presidency, trails well behind Mr. Clinton in opinion polls with less than six months before the November election.

Sen. Dole initially said in the interview that he would like to balance the budget over a six-year period, in line with budget plans put forward first by his fellow Republican lawmakers and then matched by Democrat Clinton.

But he added later the deficit could be eliminated even faster. "We would like to do it on a four-year basis."

A group of private economists advising Sen. Dole have suggested balancing the budget by the year 2000. But they have also proposed significant tax cuts, including an across-the-board reduction in income tax rates by an unspecified amount.

Other proposals made by the economists in a May 13 memo to Sen. Dole include cuts in capital gains taxes on profits made on the sale of stocks, bonds and other assets, and expanded tax breaks to encourage savings.

Sen. Dole said his economic plan was still under debate but added, "I don't rely on increased taxes to balance the budget. I would rely on reasonable spending cuts."

On his way here from Illinois Thursday, Sen. Dole told reporters, "we've got to be very careful before we launch a tax package. We've got to have some pretty good analysis as to what impact it has, who it helps and what it costs."

Some analysts, sceptical that Sen. Dole can both cut taxes sharply and eliminate the deficit, have voiced fears of a replay of the 1980s — when the deficit ballooned as taxes were cut and government spending increased.

Some pro-Republican economists and political strategists though insist that it can be done.

Charles Schultz, of the Rand Corp think tank in Santa Monica, California, argued that the tax cuts would not lose the government as much revenue as feared.

An across-the-board income tax cut, for example, would encourage Americans to work longer hours because they would take home more of the extra money they earned. It would also discourage tax evasion, boosting government revenues.

Mr. Schultz, who is one of six private economists advising Sen. Dole, told Reuters that government revenues rose after taxes were cut by the late President John F. Kennedy and by Ronald Reagan in 1986. The problem in both cases was that government spending rose faster.

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Sinn Fein urges talks with U.K. on peace

BELFAST (R) — The IRA's political wing Sinn Fein, boosted by unprecedented ballot box support, challenged Britain Saturday to end a ban on ministerial talks and explore the way forward for Northern Ireland's fragile peace process.

"Let's start talking to each other to achieve the desired objective of an IRA cessation (ceasefire)," Sinn Fein Chairman Mitchel McLaughlin told Sky News.

He urged Britain to drop a ban on ministerial talks imposed after Sinn Fein's Irish Republican Army (IRA) supporters resumed their war on Britain in February with a wave of London bombs.

Britain's Northern Ireland secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew, insisted that Sinn Fein would be banned from all-party peace talks on June 10 until the IRA ceasefire was restored.

"People cannot, in a democracy, be expected to sit down and negotiate the future of their democracy with people who are inextricably linked with people who have used the weapons in the past for identical political motives and refuse to even contemplate giving them up in the course of those negotiations," he told the British Broadcasting Corporation.

Sir Patrick was speaking the day after Sinn Fein raised its share of the national vote from 12 to 15 per cent in elections for a peace talks forum which will run alongside the all-party talks.

Sinn Fein wants assurances that the vexed issue of the surrender of IRA arms will not be allowed to bog down or dominate talks before seeking a new IRA truce.

Mr. McLaughlin said that if the format for the talks meant no progress until the IRA started handing over its weapons, there was scant hope of securing a second IRA ceasefire.

"If that precondition is still there — and quite clearly it is — we are not going to get a second ceasefire," he said.

"Sinn Fein is prepared to play its part but both governments have to be more prag-

matic and more realistic in their approach to this very serious problem."

The British and Irish governments meet again Tuesday to try to work out an agenda that includes the disarming of Northern Ireland guerrillas in a way that does not block progress on a settlement between pro and anti-British parties.

Sir Patrick and Irish Foreign Minister Dick Spring have met twice in the past three weeks but have failed to make a breakthrough on the single biggest hurdle to the success of the talks.

The country's Protestant Unionists, who want the province to stay British, insist that arms must be handed over before there can be real negotiation on shaping a new "agreed Ireland" where all can live in peace.

They have threatened to boycott or disrupt the proceedings unless so-called decommissioning of weapons is not the first item on the talks agenda but the Irish government says it should be treated as a separate issue by a separate committee.

Former U.S. Senator George Mitchell, President Bill Clinton's Ireland adviser, is expected to head this committee and to be formally approached after Tuesday's London talks.

Thursday's poll gave Sinn Fein its best showing in recent years but confirmed the traditional split in the province between Protestants who want to stay British and Catholic Irish nationalists who feel more loyalty to the Dublin government.

The mainstream Ulster Unionist Party of David Trimble topped the poll, winning 30 of the 110 seats at stake at a forum which will debate and advise peace negotiations but have no power.

Mr. Trimble's arch-rival, the Reverend Ian Paisley of the Democratic Unionist Party, came in second with 24 seats, the moderate Irish nationalist SDLP took 21 and Sinn Fein came in fourth with 17.

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A vote for fundamentalism

THE LESS-than-one per cent difference in votes between the newly-elected and outgoing Israeli prime ministers received in last week's elections suggests that their country is deeply divided over the host of issues facing it. But while it is difficult to draw a clear line dividing Israelis on each of these issues, it is not so difficult to discern the swing of the Israeli electorate to the right. The tilt is illustrated not by the Likud's rise to power, since what the party gained in the latest Knesset elections was dramatically less than what it had secured in the previous elections, but rather by the new strength of religious parties in the new Knesset.

In actual numbers, the political strength of the Likud has dropped from 40 to 32 seats. Likewise, the Labour Party lost political grounds having decreased its parliamentary strength from 44 to 34. Where the Israel political landscape changed and changed dramatically was the clear shift in favour of religious and ultra-religious parties in the country. In this context, we have seen the National Religious Party increase its strength from six to nine, the ultra orthodox Shas from six to 10 and the United Torah Judaism maintaining its four seats in very hotly contested Knesset elections that saw the left wing Meretz retaining only nine seats out of the original 12 it held till Wednesday.

The rising power of religious fundamentalism could in the final analysis be the most dramatic change in the new Israeli political landscape. The newly-elected Israeli prime minister's first act after he was officially proclaimed the winner was to pray at the Western Wall in Jerusalem even though he is not known to be an observant Jew. This came in due recognition and appreciation of the overwhelming support that Netanyahu has received from religious Israelis. This also suggests that Netanyahu would forego the pressure to form a national unity government in favour of a coalition government comprising his party's natural allies, the principal religious parties whose combined strength has reached the formidable 23 Knesset seats.

Why then the sudden dramatic swing to religion and religious fundamentalism in Israel. In a sense, religious fundamentalism is the same wherever it exists. People's religious moods are known to fluctuate from one extreme to another depending on several factors, which may include socio-economic considerations as well as reaction to materialism and ultra modern style of life. Like most developed countries, Israeli society has witnessed of late the rapid rise of many social diseases, like the breakdown of the family, drugs and sexual freedoms. The Israeli rebellion against contemporary mores is typical of other reactions worldwide, including the U.S. where the religious vote has become something to reckon with on a scale unknown in recent times. What is significant in the religious vote is also the settlers who voted for religious parties but because of their confidence that the ultra-right party are opposed to giving up any of the occupied Palestinian lands where the settlers live.

The political impact of Israeli fundamentalism would surely manifest itself most when it comes to negotiations not only over East Jerusalem and Hebron but also with regard to the final status of the entire West Bank, which is considered as part and parcel of "Greater Israel" for most Israeli religious fanatics. This is where the Arab concern will be most felt as the future of the peace process hangs in the balance.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Ra'i Saturday described the results of the Israeli elections as an unexpected coup the world was not prepared for and one that is bound to upset the whole region. Fahed Al Fanek said the results meant that 55 per cent of the Israelis opted for rejecting the peace process and for pursuing hostilities with the Arabs. With the results of the elections one can say that the Israeli society has authorised Ariel Sharon, Rafael Eitan and their like to immediately undermine the peace process, perpetuate the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, hold on to the occupied Syrian and Lebanese territories and if need be, wage wars on Israel's neighbours, according to the writer. It is good that Jordan had seized the right opportunity and regained its land and water resources from the Jewish state, protected its interests and secured its borders, otherwise it would have found itself back to square one with the return of the Likud to power in Israel, continued the writer. But he said that Jordan still has to reevaluate its position with regard to the outcome of the Israeli elections, knowing that the hawks and the militants are now at the helm in Israel.

A GLANCE at the political programme of the Likud Party reveals the aggressive nature of this rightist group which has now assumed power in Israel, said Ahmad Al Misleh who writes for Al Ra'i. This programme clearly declares that Israel will not withdraw from the occupied Syrian heights and will not allow the Palestinians to create their independent state in Palestine and will pursue efforts for building Jewish settlements in Arab lands, said the writer. If the new Israeli government does not commit itself to implementing the agreement with the Palestinians and the other Arabs, and if the new government disregards the will and the advice of the world community, including its American ally, the Middle East region will be in for further turmoil and further tensions that could trigger another conflict, warned the writer. He said that if the Israeli society approves of the Likud's programmes by deed rather than word, then the whole peace process will be paralysed, pending the emergence of new realities on the ground.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Economic prosperity — is it around the corner?

IS THE economic situation in Jordan going to improve soon? Jordanians repeatedly ask this question. My answer to it was always that the economy is already in good shape. What we need is to maintain continuity and keep the upward trend.

To prove the point, one should recall certain facts such as: the gross domestic product (GDP) is growing at a rate of not less than 5 per cent per annum. Exports of goods are rising at the rate of 15 per cent or more. The central government's budget is no more in big deficit, in fact the internal public debt is being reduced substantially. The dinar has been keeping its exchange rate at the level of \$1.41 without hurting reserves, despite the rise of the dollar against other currencies. The foreign exchange reserve of the Central Bank is stable. The inflation rate is below 5 per cent a year. Tourism is making a big jump, remittances are very healthy. What more could we reasonably ask for?

Under these favourable conditions of the national economy, the question should be about staying the course, sustaining the achievements and protecting the situation from possible slow-downs or set-backs.

There is no justification in asking for more or expecting further improvement as long as no massive foreign aid is

forthcoming, except for the 50 per cent tax reduction on oil bill. Foreign investments are not expected to come to the country overnight, and the discovery of oil is hardly in the cards.

Some critics may admit that the GDP is growing at a satisfactory rate, but they argue that the distribution of income is inequitable, that the fruits of growth are going to small groups.

"The rich are becoming richer and the poor are becoming poorer. This is obviously an appealing claim to believe but we have heard this claim for many years, and we shall continue to hear it for many years, although so far no one bothered to come up with any concrete evidence that this is actually the case."

Even if this claim is true, the problem is not a bad social. The objective in this case would be to distribute income and not bring about economic stagnation. However, according to the free economic theory, we apply, and after the downfall of socialism, the only practical way to help the poor, besides providing jobs through growth and investments, is to instil a sense of responsibility, i.e., to secure the minimum requirements of a citizen, would be no citizen who is sick, hungry or unemployed.

poverty.

Examples of actual safety nets are: education available to all children, free of charge in government schools, free or semi-free health services available to everybody in government clinics and hospitals, the National Assistance Fund which transfers cash to tens of thousands of poor families, the Development and Employment Fund which hands ready to finance thousands of young people to help them start new businesses, over and above Queen Alia Fund, Noor Al Hussein Foundation and scores of other voluntary societies active in extending a hand to the needy. Since economic prosperity will not fall from the sky, and we have nothing to gain except with hard work and gradual improvement, there is no reason to issue optimistic promises and then withdraw them after 100 days, to be replaced by yet another set of promises that prosperity is coming but only two years from now.

It seems that the required two years of waiting for prosperity did not start yet. The gap separating us from a period long enough to bring about a new government in office, which will start with promises to make miracles, but later on would ask for two years grace, and so on.

Shorter work weeks can give a boost to the economy

By Marwan M. Atalla

JORDAN IS and will continue to be an important part of the future of the Near East, and will play a fundamental role in connecting the region with the rest of the world. The Jordanian government has shown a very strong commitment towards the encouragement of investment. Therefore, it is time to look at ways to improve efficiency, while giving the people and organisations maximum flexibility. Part of the economic reform package is a review of the current six-day work week, and ways of improving it.

Several studies and surveys have been conducted regarding this subject, and many recommendations have been made, none of which offers a satisfactory answer. In addition, an experimental project took place between 1990 and 1991, in which Thursdays and Fridays constituted the weekend, and the working hours were extended. The experiment was not successful due to several factors, the two most important of which were: 1) insufficient time given people to adjust, and 2) Thursday, becoming a weekend day, increased the time zone difference between Jordan and the West. For example, a fax sent Wednesday afternoon from the U.S. was not received until Saturday in Jordan, which meant that the sender would not see the reply until Monday morning.

It is difficult to find a system that suits everyone. As a private company, ours conducted its own research regarding working hours, and the staff were split three ways when voting on most issues. However, when taking a long-term view, there must be short-term sacrifices. The system I am proposing is for all sectors, private and public, and if it is by no means perfect, it is flexible enough to accommodate most people. The system is based on flex-time, and is designed to give the employer the necessary number of working hours to run an organisation efficiently, while providing the employee with sufficient flexibility to suit his or her lifestyle, transportation and other needs. A five-day, 40-hour work week is an internationally accepted standard. In Jordan, the five working days would be Sunday through Thursday, with Fridays and Saturdays as official holidays (weekends). Friday is chosen for religious reasons and Saturday overlaps with the weekend in the West and other countries. Taking Thursday off instead of Saturday, as some companies are currently doing, does not serve the purpose and only widens the time gap between us and other countries, especially the West. The daily working hours would be divided into two four-hour periods, or a three-hour shift followed by a five-hour shift, with a mandatory break in between, which should be a minimum of 30 minutes and a maximum of 1 hour 30 minutes. A list of possible alternatives is almost infinite, and each employer and employee can arrange the most suitable schedule.

Even within companies, management could allow different employees to have different schedules, depending on the needs of the company and the needs of the employees.

With regards to the government, it is probably more practical to decide on one schedule, or two or three at the most. This would prevent confusion and enable citizens to know the government's hours with certainty.

The system described above is currently being used in the U.S., Europe and most of the Far East, and it has proven to be extremely efficient.

The mandatory break will have health benefits, like allowing employees to rest from work and perhaps have a small meal which is absolutely necessary for proper metabolism. The regular break helps people go less time without eating and, being short, it encourages them to eat less.

Some may choose to exercise or take a walk during the break, and perhaps follow the workout with a light meal — the healthiest of all alternatives.

Stress is greatly reduced when work stretches are minimised and breaks are taken, thus decreasing the chances of heart problems.

Concentration and efficiency are increased, making employees less irritable and thus they might, hopefully, cut down on their smoking.

No after lunch siesta is another advantage as sleeping immediately after a meal is a major cause of

heartburn and indigestion. Everyone is familiar with the fact that when lunch is reduced to a reasonable meal instead of a heavy one, and the afternoon siesta is avoided, people tend to sleep better, sleep earlier, which is a healthy habit.

Because of the flex-time hours, people will be going to work at different hours and traffic congestion will be reduced. The result is decreased gas consumption, and avoidance of unnecessary emission of hydrocarbons into the atmosphere.

Less traffic congestion usually means less noisy and irritable drivers, and hopefully less accidents.

A two-day weekend will allow families to spend more time together, and one could spend more time with the family.

Due to the two-day weekend, Jordanians can travel around and get to know their country better. Women will spend less time in the kitchen since they will have more time to spend in the office rather than at home. For women who work, this is yet another benefit.

People who are not extra interested in their work can choose to leave the government job and work with the private sector. This is in line with the governments downsizing plans. Moreover, with time, salaries will increase as the standard of living and productivity rise in Jordan, the private sector is and will continue paying good salaries for efficient employees, and with a suitable pension plan, government employees moving to the private sector can still enjoy the benefits of a retirement plan.

Furthermore, where

working mothers are concerned, the new system does not stop people from having part time jobs, with the advancement in technology (computers, modems etc.), it will be quite possible for a concerned working mother to work part of the time from the house, a major employer should provide day-care centres so that mothers can be close to their children during working hours (after school is over), and the two-day weekend will allow everyone to spend more time with the family.

Like everything else in life, this new idea will have a price, and I am sure that the transition will not be easy. However, we are facing a window of opportunity at this time and we must take advantage. The recent political developments are the start of something unprecedented in Jordan. Our region is going to experience an economic boom which will benefit everyone. Jordanians have always been innovative and entrepreneurial, turning the hardest of times into challenges and opportunities. If we seize the moment and take steps to improve relations between the private and public sectors, and encourage the private sector, we will help our country and everyone in it.

The writer is a Jordanian businessman, president of the local company Near East Investments, working in the real estate development. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

Finns debate NATO membership

By John Acher
Reuters

HELSINKI — Finland's strict policy of non-alignment, formed over decades of the cold war to balance the sensitivities of its Soviet neighbour without alienating the West, is in doubt as NATO shows signs of expanding east.

Leading Finnish foreign policy expert Max Jakobson triggered off wide debate by predicting that NATO expansion could force Finland and even non-aligned Sweden and Austria into the alliance, or to risk of being left in limbo.

"Remaining outside NATO would mean exclusion from European decision-making on security policy and from security cooperation between NATO and Russia and ending up in an indefinite grey zone," Mr. Jakobson told a national defence symposium this month.

He outlined a scenario in which NATO and Russia reached an agreement on security issues, making the alliance the focus of decision-making on European security.

"In that case, we would have to ask again what is the safest alternative for us — committing ourselves or remaining alone," he said.

Conservative member of parliament Pertti Salolainen said that if NATO were to expand on the basis of a deal with Russia, Finland would need to reappraise its security policy, and consider membership of NATO and the Western European Union (WEU), the emerging defence arm of the European Union (EU).

Minister for European Affairs Ole Norrback, leader of the small Swedish People's Party, went a step further.

He said it was likely that Finland would eventually join NATO but added that now was not the time.

Although Finland has taken tentative steps to closer military ties with the west, having joined NATO's partnership for peace in 1994 and gaining wu observer status the following year, such remarks are at odds with the country's foreign policy doctrine. It stipulates non-alignment and an independent defence capability.

For decades after World War II, Finland swore by neutrality, seeking to reassure a Soviet Union paranoid over the security of its western frontiers.

Finland also had bitter experience of tonight conflict with Moscow, having fought bloody wars with the Soviet union in 1939-40 and again in 1941-44.

That neutrality was transformed into official "alignment" after the collapse of the Soviet Union and Finland's integration into Europe.

President Martti Ahtisaari, a staunch supporter of non-alignment, felt compelled to end speculation in the wake of the debate on nato and issued a brief statement clarifying Finland's position.

He said that any NATO expansion should happen only if it increased security in Europe.

The question of how Finland would react to a possible NATO expansion, vehemently opposed by Russia, has surfaced as firms begin to realise the Western alliance may indeed carry out its plans to take in ex-Communist states.

"Not too long ago, the perception in Finland was that NATO enlargement would not happen," Tarmo Toivola, head of the Finnish Foreign Policy Institute, told Reuters.

"That perception has changed as we have seen that NATO is proceeding with its enlargement plans."

Russia has made it clear it does not want NATO to expand to its borders and has warned its former Warsaw pact allies and the three Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia not to join the alliance.

Mr. Jakobson insists that it is not primarily fear of Russia that would drive Finland into NATO, although he told Reuters the protection offered by the alliance would not be unwelcome.

The Finns are well aware of the dangers of being left alone with their powerful neighbour.

"Finland has historical experience of the kinds of risk that go with being in a grey zone," Mr. Vahtoranta said. He pointed to the 1939 pact between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union which cast Finland into the Soviet sphere of influence and led to the winter war.

Flourishing in the media is what the Helsinki Swedish-language newspaper Hufvudstadsbladet called "a debate about the debate about NATO".

Mr. Vahtoranta said the argument was not likely to be won by either side in the near future.

"It could take quite some time for such a reappraisal (of the policy of non-alignment) to be made, if it might not ever be made," he added.

LETTERS

Keep up the good work

To the Editor:

I HAD the pleasure of visiting Jordan this summer for the first time in my life. I can truly say that your country is one of the most interesting, enchanting and generous countries I have had the pleasure to visit.

The historical treasures present in Jordan are amazing. During my stay in Jordan I visited Jerash, Petra, Umm Qais, Azraq and the desert castles. I also visited Madaba which was my personal favourite.

While in Madaba, I visited the Archaeological Park and the Madaba Mosaic School and was very impressed with both. The Department of Antiquities really did a marvelous job. I was particularly interested and impressed with the work being done by the Madaba Mosaic School. While at the school, I was informed that they are going to begin the restoration of the Apostles Church mosaic. I am looking forward to visiting Jordan again to see this mosaic when it is replaced in its location.

The fact that this school exists shows how aware the government of Jordan is about the importance of protecting the cultural heritage. This is impressive because it doesn't only work to help restore the mosaic treasures of Jordan, it also teaches the future generations of Jordan how to respect and protect the historical treasures their country has been endowed with.

Therefore, I would like to commend the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the Italian government on their wonderful achievements in the school and all I can say is: "Keep up the good work."

Joe Fernandez,
Washington, D.C.,
U.S.A.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Palestinians upset but ready to work with Netanyahu

SHATI REFUGEE CAMP (AP) — With the right-wing victory in Israel's prime minister race now official, gloom has settled over this refugee camp, where barber Ehab Dababish and his friends spend their days sipping tea and waiting for better times.

A government led by Benjamin Netanyahu will destroy any hopes the Palestinians had for an independence homeland, say the mostly unemployed young men sitting in plastic chairs on the potholed street outside the barber shop.

"No peace, no state, no Jerusalem. It's a complete failure for peace," 23-year-old tailor Samih Fasih said.

For many Palestinians, the frustration was especially acute since they thought they had had a real shot at statehood for the first time in their bitter history marked by occupation and exile.

Talks on the final status of the West Bank and Gaza began in May, and Prime Minister Shimon Peres appeared ready to consider independence, although he said he favoured a confederation between a Palestinian entity and Jordan.

Mr. Peres lost to Mr. Netanyahu by the slimmest of margins in Wednesday's election. Final results were announced Friday.

In a joint statement Saturday, the Palestinian cabinet and Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) Executive Committee urged Mr. Netanyahu to continue efforts toward peace and to adhere to "everything that has been agreed upon, including the beginning of talks on the final status" of Jerusalem as a possible shared capital.

In the weeks leading up to the election, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat had done his best to help Mr. Peres win a tight race in which personal security was the key issue following suicide bombings by Palestinian militants.

Mr. Arafat rounded up hundreds of suspected militants, and three weeks before the vote rammed a decision through the Palestinian

National Council to revoke sections of the PLO Charter calling for Israel's destruction. The move, demanded by Mr. Peres, was meant to assure Israelis that Mr. Arafat was a sincere peace partner.

But in the end, it was not good enough. Israelis believed Mr. Netanyahu when he said Mr. Arafat was not trustworthy and that only Israeli troops could be counted on to stop the violence.

Mr. Netanyahu said initially he would never meet Mr. Arafat, whom he denounced as an arch-terrorist. In the final days of the campaign, hoping to win the support of middle-of-the-road voters, Mr. Netanyahu said he would meet Mr. Arafat if it was essential for Israel's security.

Marwan Kanafani, a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, said he expected Mr. Netanyahu to be pragmatic.

"If we look at the whole matter rationally, I think that direct contact should take place within hours," he said. "There is a necessity that both leaders should meet."

In the streets of Shati, many residents blamed the militant group Hamas for their troubles.

Hamas commissioned suicide bombings in February and March in hopes of wrecking peace-making. The group says it wants to destroy Israel and set up an Islamic state in all of the land between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River.

In response to the bombings, Mr. Peres sealed off the West Bank and Gaza. The three-month long blockade has devastated the Palestinian economy, and sent unemployment soaring to 70 per cent in Gaza.

"Hamas destroyed our economic life and now the political situation," said Haitham Fasih, a 22-year-old carpenter, now unemployed. The Gaza City chair factory where he worked had to shut down because of the border closure.

"Netanyahu will only give us expanded self-rule. This is the maximum we can get," he said.

Turkey closes down human rights group

ISTANBUL (AP) — A few days before the start of a U.N. conference here, authorities ordered a Turkish human rights group to halt activities to bring the country's Kurdish problem to the forefront.

The Kurdish dilemma is a sensitive issue for the government, which has been trying to defeat Kurdish rebels who have been waging a war for autonomy in the southeast since 1984.

Istanbul's governor on Friday ordered the independent Turkish Human Rights Association to halt its activities during the U.N. Conference, said association spokeswoman Fatma Kanar.

The conference, which begins next week, deals with the problems and the future of cities worldwide.

Ms. Kanar told the Associated Press that a few dozen policemen raided the association's offices at noon. Officers told staff members to clean up their desks and leave.

"We are not surprised at all," Ms. Kanar said.

The association had announced plans for several discussions during the U.N. gathering.

At a global meeting of parliamentarians in advance of the U.N. conference, the Greens group in the European

Parliament said holding the conference in Istanbul "inevitably calls attention to ongoing human rights violations in Turkey."

The Greens statement said 3,000 Kurdish villages had been destroyed by Turkish armed forces and contained three million people had been driven from their homes.

Thousands of Kurds have fled to Istanbul and other cities in western Turkey after the army or Kurdish guerrillas forced them out of their villages. Authorities said 330,000 people have fled their villages since the Kurdish war has started in 1984.

At the parliamentarians meeting at a heavily guarded U.N. site in central Istanbul, Wilfried Telkamper, one of the six green delegates, told the forum that the Kurdish conflict was sending waves of migration to Istanbul from Kurdish villages in southeastern Turkey.

Ilyaz Yilmazyildiz, a Turkish deputy, condemned Mr. Telkamper's speech.

"There is no systematic use of forced evacuation. People flee from their villages to escape the violence of a terrorist organisation," he said.

The government announced last week that 13,500 houses were needed for Kurdish refugees.



His Majesty King Hussein on Saturday prays at the Jaafar Ben Abee Talev Mosque in South Mazar (Petra) (photo)

South Mazar ceremony marks launch of restoration work at historic mosque

SOUTH MAZAR (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Saturday attended a ceremony in South Mazar, Karak Governorate, marking the launch of restoration work on the mosque of Jaafar Ben Abee Taleb and the tombs of the Prophet Mohammad's companions.

These companions are Jaafar Ben Abee Taleb, a cousin of the Prophet, Zeid Ben Haritha and Abdullah Ben Rowaha. Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid, who heads a royal commission entrusted with restoring the tombs of the Prophet's companions, delivered an address in

which he said the restoration project will eventually establish a complete Islamic village in all social, environmental and economic aspects.

Prince Ra'd said the committee aims to develop religious tourism in the Kingdom and will continue to restore tombs of the Prophet's companions in various parts of Jordan.

Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdul Salam Abbadi delivered another address in which he dwelt on lessons to be learnt from the Mu'ta battle and paid tribute to the King's efforts in restoring Islamic monuments in Jordan.

At the end of the ceremony, Dr. Abbadi presented the King with the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs shield.

The King toured the project site and was briefed by Prince Ra'd and Dr. Abbadi on the Prophet's phases. Afterwards, the King performed prayers at the Jaafar Ben Abee Taleb Mosque.

The ceremony was attended by His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein, several royal family members, Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, the speakers of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament, the chief of the Royal Court, the King's advisors and other senior officials.

The restoration of Jaafar Ben Abee Taleb Mosque is one of the most important projects carried out by the royal commission because of its historical significance and because the mosque contains the tombs of three of the Prophet's companions.

The first phase of the project, expected to cost JD 2.5 million, includes restoring the mosque, the market area, the clock tower and other archaeological sites.

The second phase entails building a school, a multi-purpose hall, library, plazas and gardens.

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Syria says no alternative but to pursue talks

(Continued from page 1)

Golan and said peace could never be made while Israel continued to occupy any part of Arab lands.

"There is no alternative for Israel but to withdraw fully from all the occupied Arab lands and to abandon its policy of expansion and hegemony," Al Thawra said.

"Syria does not bet on persons or parties because peace has its basis and requirements which should be met," the paper said.

"The international community and the U.S. sponsor bear the responsibility of achieving peace on this basis."

Lebanon said meanwhile it hopes Mr. Netanyahu will be different in office from Netanyahu the election campaigner.

"I hope Prime Minister Netanyahu will be other than the candidate Netanyahu," Foreign Minister Faris Bouez told reporters on Friday evening after returning from a trip to France.

"A candidate is more influenced by slogans than a man who has become responsible and who will be facing responsibilities," he added.

"We hope that Netanyahu will be realistic in a way not to destroy the hopes of peace in the Middle East."

"At this moment we are unable to take a position on Netanyahu's policy because we think he'll have to take into consideration many facts," Mr. Bouez said.

"I think we'll have to wait many weeks to know effectively what the (new) official Israeli policy is."

Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri took a grimmer view of Mr. Netanyahu's victory.

He blamed the United States for letting Mr. Peres bring forward the Israeli election rather than pushing ahead with peace negotiations.

"The political mistake it (the U.S. administration) made was to allow the Israelis to bring forward the election date for (to save) the peace process at that time. It is clear that it exposed the peace process to a big danger by making it rely on the results of the elections," Mr. Berri said.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, whose country was the first Arab government to sign a peace treaty with Israel in 1979, said Mr. Netanyahu should be given a chance to demonstrate his intentions towards the peace process.

"The new Israeli government must be given the opportunity to clarify its viewpoints and intentions towards the peace process without rush," Mr. Mubarak said, quoted by the weekly Akhbar Al Yom Saturday.

"Egypt... welcomes the concern Netanyahu has shown in supporting the peace process," Mr. Mubarak said.

The Arab League called on Mr. Netanyahu not to waste an "historic opportunity" for peace.

"The new Israeli leadership has an historic opportunity to end the state of war (with Arabs) by completely implementing international resolutions (calling) for land and for peace," Arab League

Deputy Secretary General Ahmad Benhelli said.

"They must not lose the opportunity. They must realise the impossibility of continuing to occupy Arab lands forever," Mr. Benhelli told journalists.

"True peace is achieved by the agreement of all parties' desires, not by Israeli desires alone," he said.

The league official called on the United States to "use its influence on Israel to keep the peace process moving and build landmarks on the path of negotiations on all tracks."

Libya's maverick leader, Muammar Qadhafi, said Mr. Peres' loss makes clear that a show of military force was not enough to persuade voters.

He was referring to Israel's blitz on Lebanon in April, particularly the shelling of a U.N. camp in the south that left at least 42 civilians dead, many of them children.

"The only important thing about the success of Likud and the downfall of Peres is that the killing of children and the destruction of peaceful cities will no longer constitute acts to rely upon to win elections," Colonel Qadhafi said in a statement carried by the state-run Libyan news agency JANA.

Iran's Tehran Times daily questioned Mr. Netanyahu's abilities as a national leader, noting that he has never held a significant policy-making cabinet post before.

"Hence, he can bury the peace process," it said.

Another Iranian newspaper said Israelis had voted for expansionism and hatred.

"The victory of Netanyahu is a victory for extreme religious factions in Israel, which manifests Israel's obvious policies of expansionism. This phenomenon is a serious danger to the security and stability of the region," the English-language Iran News said.

It said it was "an absolute necessity for all Islamic countries to unite and ward off this common enemy... it has become clear that Israeli society does not favour peace. It actually voted for hostility, intolerance, expansionism and hatred."

Moroccan King Hassan said he would pray day and night for Mr. Netanyahu's Likud to uphold peace commitments made by Mr. Peres.

The Moroccan King, who referred to Mr. Peres as a friend, was speaking in an interview with German television on Friday, before it was known that right-winger Mr. Netanyahu had narrowly defeated Mr. Peres.

Asked if he felt he would "lose Peres" if the Israeli Labour party lost the elections, the king replied: "I will never lose Mr. Peres. He is still alive and will always be my friend. I fear that peace will lose Peres."

"I do not want to intervene in internal Israeli affairs but if Likud wins, I would like to be sure it will respect the Oslo accord, that it will contribute to creating conditions for peaceful and fruitful coexistence between the Israeli state and a future Palestinian state, that it will honour all its commitments to an honourable, lasting and global peace," the king said.

Clinton reassures Arafat on peace process

(Continued from page 1)

Israel and the United States will be the foundation from which our two countries together continue to build a comprehensive, lasting and secure peace in the Middle East," Mr. Clinton said that in the telephone call to congratulate.

Mr. Netanyahu he also discussed "our enduring friendship with Israel — our commitment to its strength and security and to a lasting peace in the Middle East."

The president said that he had also spoken with Mr. Peres: "I told him to take

comfort ... decades from now, people will look back and see in Shimon Peres one of the great peacemakers of our time."

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said Friday he had no plans to return to the Middle East but would brief Mr. Netanyahu soon on the peace process.

"I don't have any present plans to go back to the Middle East," Mr. Christopher told reporters, adding that the United States would brief Mr. Netanyahu when he visits the United States after he forms a government.

He said Mr. Netanyahu's visit to Washington would provide an opportunity for U.S. officials to have "good and candid" discussions with him on the peace process.

Mr. Christopher stated that the United States accepted the results of the Israeli election and echoed earlier remarks from the White House saying that Washington was ready to work with Mr. Netanyahu.

"The United States and Israel have a special relationship," he said. "The bonds between us ... are enduring and unshakable."

They'll remain as strong in the future as they have in the past."

Mr. Christopher urged the Palestinians an other Arab states "not to prejudice the new government ... and not to rush the judgement."

The United States assured Egypt on Saturday of the need to "work together" for the peace process following the election of Mr. Netanyahu, the American ambassador to Cairo said.

Edward Walker met with Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa and "discussed the elections in Israel,

King rejects fears

(Continued from page 1)

a free and secure and decent life and have the right to prepare a safe future for the coming generations," said the King. "We have succeeded in regaining our rights in full and we helped our Palestinian brothers and backed their endeavours throughout the years of their struggle. We will continue to help them and support for the Palestine Liberation Organisation, the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, to enable them to attain their full rights. We have no ambition in this and we do not seek to interfere in their internal affairs."

"With regard to future Jordanian-Palestinian relations, we have said time and again that this is a premature subject and discussing such matter now will not be in the interest of either side," the King said.

Referring to the Gulf war, the King said: "We have overcome the negative results of that war in terms of our relations with some of the Arab countries and the black cloud has finally been cleared away, especially as our brothers have realised our noble intentions and our policies and stands vis-a-vis the issues that concern the Arab Nation. We will continue to support the Arab Nation and we will always advocate Arab unity and solidarity. Arab countries should rise above all petty differences and look towards the future."

On Iraq, he said: "Our sole objective has been to preserve Iraq's unity and territorial integrity and to end the Iraqi people's sufferings. We have no other objective and no ambition except to see Iraq free of its ordeal and returning to the Arab fold, with its citizens enjoying their rights and freedom."

On the domestic front, the King said: "The Kingdom has always served as a homeland for migrants, who have always enjoyed equality in rights, duties and national unity marked by tolerance. This is a basic principle in the strength of this country and therefore every citizen should protect this unity and prevent any tampering with it or abuse of its impeccable image in any form. As I have always said any one who tampers with this unity will be my adversary until doomsday. Jordan will remain the homeland of all Arabs."

"We have chosen democracy as our way of life and we seek to make it an example for others and therefore we feel that we should be committed to its essence," he said. "Responsible freedom should uphold higher national interests, and pluralism means that we have to respect other people's views within the framework of the Constitution and the given laws."

The King warned that "freedom and free expression does not mean infringing on the state and the symbols of this nation. Nor does it mean that one can exploit the climate of tolerance and democracy to harm the nation and its image and to belittle the country's achievement. There is a great difference between constructive and objective criticism and between attempts to distort the nation's image."

"Pluralism does not mean that a certain group must impose its will and ideas on the others. We have built this nation with dedication, diligence, many sacrifices and patience, and accomplished a great deal in which we have the right to take pride undaunted by the voices of the weak and the suspicious and those who feel frustrated and suffering from an inferiority complex."

"We realise the difficulties and the obstacles our country is facing and its meagre resources, but we also believe the tour qualified and educated Jordanian citizens constitute our means for overcoming these challenges and serve as a tool for development," the King said. "We also realise that some sectors of our society suffer from poverty and unemployment but I have great confidence in a promising future and in the citizens of this country and their potential to transcend all these obstacles."

"I have designated my government to work hard for realising the potentials of the country's citizens and resources and for opening new scopes for enhancing our development on a scientific basis and removing obstacles impeding this march."

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of Mr. Peres' promises, such as withdrawing troops from the West Bank town of Hebron.

He rejects Palestinians' desire to share Jerusalem as a capital and has come out against a Palestinian state.

But Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa, who visited Syria on Friday, and Arab leaders should adopt a wait-and-see approach.

"It is wise to give the new Israeli prime minister enough time to form his policies and positions on the peace process in his capacity as prime minister, irrespective of the statements issued during the election campaign," Mr. Musa said.

The PFLP spokesman strongly criticised Mr. Arafat "for selling the last card he had, which is the amendment of the Palestinian charter in favour of Peres."

"Arafat wanted to rescue Peres and now he has nothing to offer to Netanyahu. He should have played this card in a better way," the PFLP spokesman said.

The PFLP, which has a strong presence in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and claimed responsibility for several bloody attacks against Israel, belongs to a 10-member alliance which vowed to wreck the Palestinian-Israeli deal.

Other members of the alliance include the Hamas movement, which carried out suicide bombings in Israel in February and March that killed 59 people.

Summit plans said on hold

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Mubarak told Egypt's Middle East News agency that Mr. Netanyahu's victory "reflected the will of the Israeli people."

"Egypt is keen to establish a just and comprehensive peace in the region," the Egyptian leader said. "It welcomes what Netanyahu has shown of support for the peace process."

State-run media said Mr. Mubarak also phoned Mr. Peres and thanked him for his work.

Mr. Netanyahu has promised to make security his top priority, slow the peace negotiations and renege on some

cess and that talks would resume as soon as the new cabinet and new negotiating team was formed," Mr. Abbas told Reuters.

"We look forward to cooperation on peace with the new government ... and we hope the new government feels the same way," Mr. Abbas said.

"We have dealt with the Labour government and found full cooperation and a genuine desire for peace from it. We hope we will have the same experience with the Likud government."

In Damascus, Palestinian guerrilla groups vowed to intensify armed struggle against Israel in response to the election of Mr. Netanyahu as prime minister.

"Netanyahu's election paves the way for increased military operations against Israel during the coming period," said a spokesman for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), led by George Habash.

"The election of Netanyahu has weakened the

U.S.: Worldwide demand for oil seen rising 44 per cent by 2015

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Worldwide oil consumption will grow 44 per cent by the year 2015, with Arab Gulf countries continuing to meet much of the increased demand, the U.S. Department of Energy has reported.

A department study, entitled International Energy Outlook 1996 with projections to 2015, said world oil supplies would be able to meet demand.

But it warned of increases in cost and emissions as demand rises from its present level of 69 million barrels a day to 99 million.

Gulf members in the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) will provide more than 40 per cent and possibly as much as 52 per cent of world oil supplies, according to the forecast.

It said Gulf OPEC output was expected to range from 37.8 million barrels daily to as much as 53.5 million barrels. Such producers, led by Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, now turn out about 18 million barrels a day, or 29 per cent of

total world oil use.

The report noted that oil reserves, located primarily in OPEC countries since the 1980s, could also show marked increases in the next 20 years in non-OPEC areas.

"In the late 1980s, more than 350 billion barrels of crude oil reserves were added worldwide," the study found. "The additions were made predominantly by the OPEC nations, almost 94 per cent of the total."

But it added that while OPEC output has been rising steadily since the mid-1980s, "crude oil production from non-OPEC suppliers has shown, surprising resilience over the past two decades, increasing by more than two-thirds."

According to the U.S. geological survey, around two-thirds of the more than 450 billion barrels of undiscovered oil that might be recovered could be found in non-OPEC producers.

"In this context, one may conclude that OPEC could potentially remain at less than a 50 per cent share of worldwide

production even in the face of strong demand growth for at least the first two decades of the next century," the report said.

But the energy department data indicated that OPEC countries would continue to have great influence on the world oil market.

"It is assumed that OPEC nations will pursue policies, and that investment capital will be available, to expand production capacity as necessary to meet growing demand," the report said.

The study estimated that OPEC producers overall could boost output to a level exceeding 55 million barrels a day by 2015.

"This outlook assumes that Iraq will resume exports in 1997 and will gradually build up its output to almost three million barrels per day by the year 2000," the report said.

As the report was being prepared, Iraq concluded an agreement with the United Nations and was expected to resume oil exports this year.

OPEC members are Algeria, Ecuador, Gabon,

Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Venezuela.

The report foresees a continued decline in North American production, including the United States, but said U.S. output would recover and return to current levels by 2015.

"Due mainly to the decline in U.S. production," the report said, "North American output will show steady decline into the early years of the next century."

The study said that although there had been "serious declines" in oil production in the former Soviet Union in the 1990s, "largely because of the economic problems of the post-communist era," new data suggested that the trend might have halted at a low point of about seven million barrels daily.

"A gradual recovery is expected over the remainder of the decade, but no significant production gains (in the former Soviet Union) are anticipated before the turn of the century," according to the department.

Small countries more competitive than giants — study

GENEVA (R) — Three small economies — Singapore, Hong Kong and New Zealand — are the world's most attractive to foreign business and are outstripping the giants in competitiveness, according to a report issued Thursday.

The report, by the Geneva-based World Economic Forum (WEF), put the United States only fourth in a global competitiveness table, with Japan at 13th and core European Union (EU) members Germany and France lagging even further down the list.

And while, given the size of their economies, the United States, Japan, Germany and China would have the largest share of world growth up to the end of the next decade, the report found that the smaller countries would grow the fastest.

"Five of the six most competitive nations are small, open economies with relatively small governments and low tax rates," the WEF said. The other two just behind the United States in the 49-country list were Luxembourg and Switzerland.

The report was the second on national competitiveness to come out of Switzerland this week, after that of the

forum's former partner, the Lausanne International Institute for Management Development (IMD), published last weekend.

The IMD had the United States in first place, followed by Singapore and Hong Kong.

The WEF said its definition of competitiveness was "the ability of a country to achieve sustained high rates of economic growth." A nation was internationally competitive if its institutions and government policies supported this end.

Apart from the strong showing of the small Asia-Pacific countries, the forum said its findings this year showed EU states shipping behind because their social welfare systems were proving too heavy a burden, even for rich countries.

Germany's decline to 22nd in an index where it was once among the top five was "consistent with the ill mood, as the so-called social partners debate the downsizing of the German welfare state," it said.

But the forum analysts put Britain, 19th in the IMD ratings well behind Germany, in 15th place — outranked among EU members only by Luxembourg and Denmark, which was placed 11th, and just ahead of Finland, 16th, and the Netherlands, 17th.

The report saw special success for "entrepreneur" economies — Singapore, Hong Kong, Luxembourg and Switzerland — which were small and open and specialised in providing trade and financial services to the rest of the world.

New Zealand's high ranking, it said, was "a tribute to a decade of structural and policy reforms" including opening the economy, the scaling-back of government spending, privatisation and innovations in fields ranging from fiscal policy to banking.

Although the United States was the most competitive of the large economies, it fell behind because of moderately high rates of government spending and taxation, relatively low savings and "simmering frustrations with the justice system."

Japan, which had headed the old WEF/IMD joint ratings for several years until 1993, was now 13th, largely because it was still relatively closed to international trade and finance and had continuing fiscal problems.

ILO warns of one billion people in urban poverty by 2000

GENEVA (AFP) — As many as one billion people could be living in urban poverty by 2000, evoking nightmare scenarios of spiralling crime, overcrowding, hunger and disease in the world's cities, the International Labour Organisation warned.

By the turn of the century, one half of humanity will live and work in cities, with developing countries accounting for the major share of the new urban population, said ILO Deputy Director-General Katherine Hagen.

"These people will need jobs if the new cities are to develop as centres of economic opportunity and civilisation rather than zones of inequality and misery," Ms. Hagen said in the report.

"Only the generation of productive employment can break the vicious circle of urban poverty that is taking root in cities worldwide," the ILO said the ranks of ur-

ban poor are expected to have swelled to as many as one billion people by 2000, compared with 400 million people, or one-third of the world's urban population, at the beginning of the decade.

"Poverty-related problems such as overcrowding, hunger, disease, crime and malnutrition are increasingly prevalent even in the inner-cities of the wealthiest, most advanced industrialised countries," the report added.

In addition, the urban poor face limited access to shelter, education, health and social services, and often pay higher prices for essentials such as food, water and clothing than those who are better off, it said.

The report was prepared for the second United Nations conference on human settlements to be held in Istanbul from June 3 to 14, where the ILO intends to present an urban employment charter calling on the international community to co-

operate on creating jobs and to mobilise resources at all government levels.

In absolute terms, the ILO said Asia represents the largest concentration of urban poverty in the world, while in the developing world, African cities have the highest percentage of poverty, with 41 per cent of the urban population living below the poverty line.

The ILO estimates that there will be 1.2 billion new entrants to the world labour market by 2025, with most jobs needing to be created in cities. It said the share of non-agricultural employment surged by 93 per cent in the last four decades and now accounts for 40 per cent of all employment in developing countries.

By 2015, nearly 80 per cent of all city dwellers will

be in developing countries, compared with 65 per cent in 1994, while in industrialised countries, urban populations are stabilising or even shrinking, the report said.

Despite the problems of rapid urbanisation, the ILO said cities were centres of productivity and engines of economic growth, making a disproportionate contribution to gross domestic product.

"Cities are a resource that needs to be developed sustainably and with a view to increasing human well-being and social justice,"

Tokyo prices 59% higher than in N.Y.

TOKYO (AFP) — Living in Tokyo costs 59 per cent more than in New York but only two per cent more than in Geneva, according to a government survey on consumer prices.

The survey, covering the prices of some 400 items as of November last year, also showed that prices in Tokyo were 53 per cent higher than in London, 34 per cent higher than in Paris and 35 per cent higher than in Berlin, the Economic Planning Agency said.

The figures were based on the average exchange rates in 1995.

Price gaps would be smaller now in New York and London as the yen has fallen back against the dollar and the pound since the second half of last year, the agency said.

Geneva is known as the most expensive city in

Europe but housing rents were 73 per cent higher in Tokyo.

Compared with New York, clothing and shoe prices were 93 per cent higher here, energy and water fees were 117 per cent higher and housing rents were 106 per cent higher.

Food prices were 99 per cent higher in Tokyo than in London.

THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen



JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

OMBUG
PRUCO
GYNHID
PICES

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: BY

Saturday's Jumbles: BEFOG LAPEL VALUED PARDON

Answer: What the animal trainer considered the stoic seat — UNFLAPPABLE

THAT SCRAMBLED-WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Argentin

I've got to work on my technique.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR AN ART EXAM.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: BY

Saturday's Jumbles: BEFOG LAPEL VALUED PARDON

Answer: What the animal trainer considered the stoic seat — UNFLAPPABLE

THE Daily Crossword by Daniel J. Read

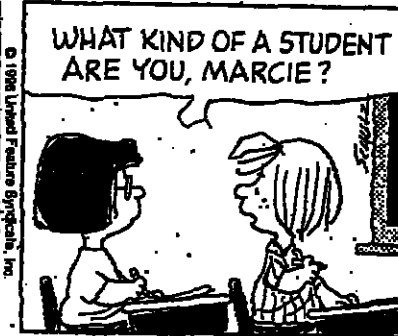
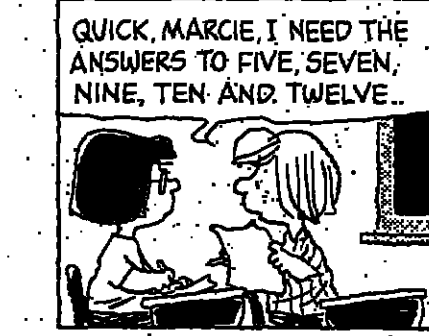
ACROSS

- 1 Bad coverlet.
- 6 Sharpen.
- 11 Early clock.
- 13 Fencing foil.
- 15 Painter's board.
- 16 Lie.
- 17 Son of Seth.
- 18 Come afterward.
- 20 Long time periods.
- 21 From — Z (everything).
- 22 Group of three.
- 24 Old lang.
- 25 Country prefix.
- 27 Have dinner.
- 28 Articles in a series.
- 30 Sense.
- 32 Curt.
- 33 Public disturbance.
- 34 Spanish hall.
- 35 Straighten, as wheels.
- 37 Grifter.
- 40 Worthless material.
- 41 Gypsy man.
- 42 Church official.
- 44 CIA, once.
- 45 Double.
- 48 Spanish one.
- 49 Furniture wood.
- 51 Plant with sword-shaped leaves.
- 52 Frosts a cake.
- 53 Elch.
- 55 Midding.
- 57 1942 Oscar winner, "Mrs. —".
- 58 Narrates.
- 59 Lawsuits.
- 60 Oueues.

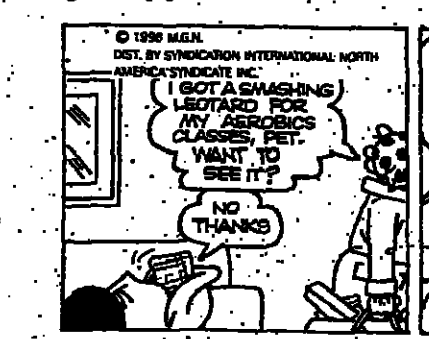
DOWN

- 1 Specified portion.
- 2 Set free.
- 3 — of March.
- 4 Ignited.
- 5 Spud.
- 6 Frozen rain.
- 7 Sleuth, briefly.
- 8 Hold sway.
- 9 Baseball team.
- 10 Pseudonym.
- 11 Asparagus unit.
- 12 Not strict.
- 13 Apple or fig.
- 14 Tries.
- 15 Unforeseen obstacle.
- 22 Later on in the day.
- 23 Gave in.
- 26 Hindu garments.
- 29 Beaten track.
- 31 Electrically charged particle.
- 32 Light brown.
- 34 Metal urn.
- 35 — and Old Lace.
- 36 Pasta-dish.
- 37 Living room piece.
- 38 Train.
- 39 Breaks a promise.
- 40 Tribal pole.
- 41 Movie critic.
- 43 Flowers.
- 46 Surlers note these.
- 47 Even.
- 50 Malay dagger.
- 52 Teheran's country.
- 54 — Maria.
- 56 Yale student.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n Jeff



HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SUNDAY

JUNE 2, 1996

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Much study and meditation can bring the results today as a wise Arien and you will feel satisfied with your success, especially when it is noticed by those in authority. This evening you should rest for the next few days.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Get together with good friends whose ideas concerning business activities are similar to your own and exchange valuable information, which will be quite helpful to you both when reviewed by those in authority.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) This is a fine day today to show that you are an A-T citizen as a result of your actions and an inspiration to those who you have contact. Attend to some public function which you have been asked to participate in later tonight.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Be with wise and educated individuals today who can assist you to make your days ahead brighter, and in the process you will be able to show that you are intelligent. Tonight you can be romantic with your mate if you are alone.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Your intuition is good today and you can make big headway in the business world if you use it wisely, so make the right impression upon those in authority as a result of your actions. Show devotion to your mate.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Situation arise which will give you better understanding today in your relationships with those others whom you come into contact. Be happy later this evening through the contact of those living under your roof.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) This is a good day today to be of valuable service to others, especially those who are less fortunate or who have some physical condition. Later tonight you can spend this evening with good friends in some fascinating activities.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Be alert to invitations or pleasurable activities which you would like to attend to today and send to whomever sent it to you with warmest regards your acceptance. By this evening you should have some prosperous idea worked out.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You can come to a better understanding with close friends today and establish greater harmony with these individual concerning some important business opportunity which has just come to your attention at this time.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) This is a good day today to visit with interesting and important individuals who could be critical for your career success, so you should make this a most delightful day for everyone who is involved in your plans.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Study your property and other assets today and decide how you can best improve and add to their value, which will make you more financially secure for the days ahead. Tonight will be good for gaining your peace of mind.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Consult your subconscious today and know what it is truly desire in life and decide on just how go about obtaining your goals. By this evening you have decided upon the best method of operation to complete some project.

Birthstone of June: Emerald

Government sign lease on Ammoun Training Hotel

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government Saturday leased the Ammoun Training Hotel (ATH) to the Jordanian Tourism Hotel Training Company (JTHTC) which will upgrade the facility's training programmes and improve its performance.

The 10-year lease, signed by Minister of Finance Marwan Awad and JTHTC General Manager Michel Nazzari, takes effect July 1 when the company takes over the management of the hotel.

The JTHTC will pay the government five per cent of the institution's total

revenues at the end of each fiscal year, excluding the agreed upon one-year grace period.

Under the agreement, the Ministry of Tourism will facilitate the company's contacts with the government and United Nations agencies for the purpose of attracting financial and technical assistance for the company so that it will be able to modernise and upgrade the performance of the ATH.

The agreement calls for the company to introduce new training courses and curricula approved by the Ministry of

Higher Education, and train Jordanians in hotel and tourism industry affairs with an eye on Jordanian tourism markets. According to the agreement, a minimum of 100 trainees should be successfully graduated from the programme annually.

The company will coordinate its work with the Ministry of Education which originally established the ATH in 1981.

It will also allow government school students in the hotel training course for the tawjihi examinations access to the hotel facilities

to acquire the necessary practical training, according to the agreement.

The two sides agreed that a board of trustees be set up with a two-year mandate to supervise the performance of the new management.

Minister of Finance Marwan Awad said after the signing ceremony that the JTHTC is a newly established JD 1 million company. He added that Jordan is expecting a major boom in its tourism industry and needs trained and qualified personnel to work in this sector.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET
HOUSING BANK OFFICE: AMMAN - STREET 1
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 01/06/1996

MARKET NAME	MARKET LAST	COMPANY'S NAME	P / K	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
250.000	205.000	AMMAN BANK	12.3	1.58	7	160	35940	224.75	224.50	-.25
4.830	4.180	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	12.8	2.18	8	8090	39823	4.45	4.45	-
4.740	4.250	CHIEF AMMAN BANK	12.4	2.13	1	3000	14100	4.60	4.70	+.10
7.400	3.250	BANK OF JORDAN	12.4	0.00	3	227	779	3.43	3.44	+.01
1.590	1.020	MID. EAST INV. CO.	68.6	0.00	1	450	477	1.04	1.06	+.02
2.700	2.300	INDUSTRIAL DEV. CO.	5.2	6.08	10	2800	5754	2.35	2.29	-.06
8.300	6.250	THE HOUSING BK.	12.8	3.12	5	5500	24365	4.43	4.43	-
3.480	2.800	JOR. BANKING CO.	20.3	0.00	3	152	440	2.82	2.80	-.02
1.500	.920	JOR. GULF BANK	6.0	7.00	25	40500	40500	1.00	1.00	-
4.180	2.200	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	19.0	0.00	18	3434	13638	3.98	3.98	-
2.900	2.430	UNION BANK (JORDAN)	3.7	5.38	4	1590	2779	2.81	2.80	-.01
1.560	1.410	AMMAN BANK	12.4	0.00	18	16899	7188	2.47	2.47	-
8.880	4.780	AMMAN BANKING CO.	24.3	0.00	3	549	2878	4.78	4.70	-.08
1.930	1.070	PHILADEL. INV. CO.	6	0.00	3	3880	4338	1.22	1.21	-.01
BANK SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 178.38 CHNG: -0.14 110 85747 189290										
3.380	3.040	JORDAN INSURANCE	13.7	2.33	2	1094	3391	3.20	3.10	-
2.910	2.130	JOR. FARMER INSUR.	6.8	5.46	4	1350	3141	2.34	2.31	-.03
2.680	2.100	AMMAN LIFE INSUR.	7.9	7.68	1	200	210	2.10	2.10	-
3.370	2.600	JORDAN GULF INSUR.	6.8	4.92	4	1700	5120	2.95	2.08	-.08
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 123.79 CHNG: -0.15 11 4244 11882										
1.930	1.830	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	13.1	7.80	28	13772	23036	1.50	1.50	-
1.860	1.140	ENERG. ELECTRICITY	6.7	0.00	1	3500	6218	1.50	1.48	-.02
2.960	2.430	SHIPPING LINES	10.3	8.20	2	2800	3660	2.48	2.44	-.04
2.730	1.130	HELIX, PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	9	2300	1696	1.45	1.40	-.05
2.480	1.790	AMMAN BANKING CO.	12.4	0.00	8	8320	11380	2.23	2.08	-.15
3.650	3.090	AMMAN BANKING CO.	12.4	4.39	8	1850	5903	3.18	3.13	-.05
1.280	.970	JORDAN BANKING CO.	30.7	0.00	1	50	50	1.04	.99	-.05
1.510	.980	AMMAN BANKING CO.	11.1	0.00	1	750	735	.98	.98	-
2.540	1.810	SHIPPING CO.	11.1	4.78	11	2800	3980	2.13	2.10	-.03
SECTOR SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 116.36 CHNG: -0.77 67 30722 46261										
4.010	3.380	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	18.6	2.92	25	12852	44171	3.46	3.43	-.03
8.840	8.710	AMMAN PORTLAND CO.	18.2	3.74	21	400	2140	2.42	2.35	-.07
10.850	8.950	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	13.9	5.79	23	2310	23985	10.33	10.37	+.04
5.760	5.600	AMMAN PETROL. REFIN.	20.6	5.33	27	7812	29414	3.79	3.78	-.01
6.480	5.600	JOR. PETROL. REFIN.	7.8	3.97	1	800	3150	6.30	6.30	-
4.080	3.900	JOR. PETROL. REFIN.	18.0	2.85	2	2000	7020	3.45	3.52	+.07
3.210	2.800	AMMAN PETROL. REFIN.	7.1	10.87	2	1150	3144	2.75	2.75	-
2.980	1.620	AMMAN PETROL. REFIN.	7.2	0.00	4	800	1260	1.71	1.70	-.01
6.340	4.640	AMMAN PETROL. REFIN.	7.2	8.75	11	3600	18848	4.64	4.87	+.23
1.740	.450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	4	0.00	47	88400	90717	.68	.69	+.01
1.880	1.340	AMMAN PETROL. REFIN.	18.6	0.38	5	1900	2366	1.25	1.24	-.01
1.480	1.000	AMMAN PETROL. REFIN.	18.6	7.14	4	1005	844	.85	.84	-.01
2.800	1.060	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	32	6800	9445	1.43	1.41	-.02
1.300	.830	JOR. ROCKETRY IND.	21.4	0.00	8	1400	1828	1.11	1.09	-.02
9.200	2.660	AMMAN PETROL. REFIN.	21.4	0.00	8	3900	11832	3.82	3.82	-
1.800	.950	AMMAN PETROL. REFIN.	21.4	0.00	8	2800	3288	1.09	1.09	-
2.520	1.080	AMMAN PETROL. REFIN.	21.4	0.00	1	750	380	1.54	1.53	-.01
3.550	2.380	AMMAN PETROL. REFIN.	21.4	7.72	23	8880	22886	2.58	2.59	+.01
2.350	1.380	JOR. IND. RESOURCES	20.8	0.00	3	1000	1630	1.54	1.53	-.01
2.000	1.000	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	31.0	0.00	18	6200	1981	1.17	1.14	-.03
2.510	1.890	AMMAN PETROL. REFIN.	21.4	0.00	26	7500	13837	1.69	1.65	-.04
1.560	1.180	AMMAN PETROL. REFIN.	21.4	0.00	3	2500	3276	1.29	1.27	-.02
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 119.14 CHNG: -0.66 277 158779 257571										
1.840	1.710	AMMAN PETROL. REFIN.	21.4	0.00	1	1000	1630	1.54	1.53	-.01
1.480	1.000	AMMAN PETROL. REFIN.	21.4	0.00	1	750	380	1.54	1.53	-.01
2.800	1.060	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	32	6800	9445	1.43	1.41	-.02
1.300	.830	JOR. ROCKETRY IND.	21.4	0.00	8	1400	1828	1.11	1.09	-.02
9.200	2.660	AMMAN PETROL. REFIN.	21.4	0.00	8	3900	11832	3.82	3.82	-
1.800	.950	AMMAN PETROL. REFIN.	21.4	0.00	8	2800	3288	1.09	1.09	-
2.520	1.080	AMMAN PETROL. REFIN.	21.4	0.00	1	750	380	1.54	1.53	-.01
3.550	2.380	AMMAN PETROL. REFIN.	21.4	7.72	23	8880	22886	2.58	2.59	+.01
2.350	1.380	JOR. IND. RESOURCES	20.8	0.00	3	1000	1630	1.54	1.53	-.01
2.000	1.000	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	31.0	0.00	18	6200	1981	1.17	1.14	-.03
2.510	1.890	AMMAN PETROL. REFIN.	21.4	0.00	26	7500	13837	1.69	1.65	-.04
1.560	1.180	AMMAN PETROL. REFIN.	21.4	0.00	3	2500	3276	1.29	1.27	-.02
GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 146.37 CHNG: -0.41 445 279492 514985										

PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 01/05/1998											
	.680	.700	JOR. TRADE INC.	19.7	0.00	8	2800	1880	.74	.74	-
			ISRA. FOR INVESTMENT	20.6	0.00	1	280	263	1.00	1.05	+.05
M	1.000	.760	UNION INV. 50*	77.5	0.00	7	4400	1364	.81	.81	-
	1.830	.630	AMAN PET. INVEST.		0.00	26	17780	13848	.77	.78	+.01
		.640	AMMAN PETROL. - JORDO		0.00	12	6800	4259	.65	.64	-.01
	1.160	.630	AMAN FOOD & MED.		0.00	14	11780	8178	.70	.69	-.01
	1.940	1.380	AMEL. CHEMICALS		0.00	2	1180	1817	1.57	1.58	+.01
	.980	.520	AMAN INTL. INV. CORP.		0.00	1	800	310	.64	.62	-.02
	1.220	.600	AMEL. CHEMICALS		0.00	9	3000	3000	.67	.68	+.01
	1.700	.700	JORD. INDU. & MAR. CO.		0.00	13	57771	44772	.77	.78	+.01
	1.180	.600	MORCAN DRES & MOUTES		0.00	3	2180	1226	.59	.57	-.02
	1.190	.800	JORDAN STEEL		0.00	21	16850	15683	.84	.83	-.01
	1.030	.470	HIGAZI PHARM. 78*		0.00	1	250	110	.69	.69	-
	1.810	1.100	UNION PETRO. 75*		0.00	12	4584	4527	1.23	1.24	+.01
	1.030	.680	BALU PETRO. 60*		0.00	3	2500	547	.73	.71	-.02
	.870	.870	INDS. CORP.	37.0	0.00	27	38236	38212	.89	.89	-
	1.830	.880	INDS. CERAMIC		0.00	7	2180	1989	.93	.91	-.02
	1.900	.700	MED. EAST COMPLEX	0.4	0.00	60	49900	34888	.72	.72	-
GRAND TOTAL						216	340891	173081			
1 New 12 months high											
2 New 12 months low											
3 Stock dividend during the past 12 months											
4 Listed during the past 12 months											
5 P/E ratio is 100 or more											
6 Negative B/S											
7 Negative B/S or N/A for the most recent year											

1: New 12 months high
2: New 12 months low
3: Stock divided during the past 12 months
4: Listed during the past 12 months
5: P/E ratio is 100 or more
6: Negative P/E
7: Listing is new or N/A for the most recent year

AIDS: A booming business

NEW YORK (AFP) — Airlines, medical laboratories and organisers of meditation seminars were among some 150 companies to exhibit at the first trade show to target the booming market of HIV-infected people and AIDS patients.

Others playing their wares at the two-day fair that opened here Friday included medical associations, hospitals and companies specialised in repurchasing life insurance policies.

"AIDS is definitely a deadly disease, but many of us live for 10 or 20 years," said Sean Strub, who organised the event, which he said "wants to be a place for consumers and companies to meet."

"Some may find it unfortunate that AIDS is a business, but this is a massive disease, and this is the nature of the capitalist system, that's how it is," said Mr. Strub.

Mr. Strub publishes a monthly magazine named Poz aimed at a readership of AIDS patients and HIV-infected people. Mr. Strub himself has been infected with HIV — the virus that causes AIDS — for at least 17 years, according to his doctors.

According to the centres for disease control and prevention in Atlanta, Georgia, more than 530,000 people were living with acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) in the United States as of March.

Between 600,000 and 900,000 people are currently HIV-infected, a figure that rises by 40,000 a year. In New York alone, about 80,000 people are HIV-positive, according to the city's health department.

The crowd to the Javits Centre, where the trade fair is held, was young and sexually, and ethnically mixed.

Mr. Strub said he expected at least 5,000 visitors, two-thirds of them AIDS patients or people who carry HIV.

"To be part of this trade fair is just a business decision for us," said Rick Cirillo, American Airlines' marketing director for the homosexual community.

"Our clients are here, and we come to meet them like in any other trade show," he said. "We're sponsoring a great number of gay and lesbian events, everybody knows it, and it didn't darken our image whatsoever — so why would we stay away?" he said.

Companies specialised in repurchasing life insurance policies and pharmaceutical laboratories have also taken the opportunity to talk directly to their clients.

"This is the first time we participate in such a fair, but I have to say I don't think of any other fair where we could talk to patients like we do here with HIV positive people," said David Jermasek of Abbott Laboratories.

In the past, the U.S. pharmaceutical group generally distributed its brochures through doctors, particularly descriptions of its "Norvir" treatment, one of the protease inhibitors that has recently hit the market.

"AIDS patients are highly informed people and we have professional talks with them about the pro and con of our medications. I can't imagine doing the same thing at a senior trade show with a medication for prostate insufficiency," said Mr. Jermasek.

According to Mr. Strub, several companies said they were unable to take part in the trade fair but would like to participate in the next one, to be held in Miami, Florida, later in the year.

Iraq expects oil deals next week

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq has offered to sell oil to U.S. and other foreign firms under a U.N.-approved plan and expects to sign its first contracts in Vienna next week, an official said Tuesday.

The State Oil Marketing Organisation (SOMO) has contacted Coastal of Texas and other U.S. oil firms for the first time since the sanctions were imposed six years ago. SOMO's executive director Saddam Hassan told AFP.

Iraq has also sent facsimiles or telexes to other foreign firms, including the British-Dutch consortium Shell as well as Total and Elf of France, Mr. Hassan added.

All the companies contacted since the oil-for-food deal was signed on May 20 with the United Nations in New York have "expressed their willingness to resume ties with SOMO," he said.

Most of the contracts will be signed in the Austrian capital, on the sidelines of the June 5 meeting of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), he said.

DAILY

A review of news from the Arabic press

RJ starts second step of restructuring programme

UNDER A memorandum of understanding signed with the national airline, Royal Jordanian (RJ), the Middle East Capital Group will conduct a study on the feasibility of selling RJ aircraft valued at \$200 million and then leasing them again. RJ General Manager Nader Dahabi described the study as the second step in the government procedures to restructure RJ within the framework of transforming it into a public shareholding company that would operate on commercial basis for two years. The cabinet has not yet approved transforming RJ into a company but the Ministerial Development Committee is still discussing some measures

Jazz meet Sonics in Game 7 today Harsh reality intrudes on key NBA matchup

SEATTLE (AFP) — Even if Karl Malone leads the Utah Jazz to the National Basketball Association title, his 13-year-old friend Danny Ewing probably will not live long enough to see it.

The wheelchair-bound boy has entered the terminal stages of leukemia, blood cancer, and has perhaps two weeks to live.

"Sometimes people touch your life," Malone said. "This is bittersweet. This puts life in perspective. This is just a game." Such are the realities weighing on the Jazz and Seattle.

Supersonics as they prepare for Sunday's seventh and final game of their National Basketball Association Western Conference championship series. Utah won 118-83 on Thursday to even the series at 3-3, with Malone dedicating his 32-point,

10-rebound effort to Ewing. Sunday's winner will face Chicago in the NBA finals starting Tuesday.

Malone called the boy one of his closest friends. He has known Ewing for two years. Malone invited him into the Jazz locker room after Thursday's victory.

"He is a great player," Ewing said. "He's a lot better role model than most famous people. He's a good friend. He has helped brighten my life."

Seattle's Gary Payton knows how Malone feels, but has not shared his story publicly. A life-or-death situation involving a member of Payton's immediate family made the Sonics' guard preoccupied and off his game.

Payton scored only 10 points Thursday, his lowest output since he had the same total during Seattle's

loss to Sacramento in the Game Two of the first round. He took only seven shots and made five turnovers. He had scored 31 points in the previous game.

"I don't have any excuses. That was just the way I was playing," said Payton, whose teammates denied he was bothered by a previously injured right calf.

The Jazz could become only the sixth club in NBA history to rally from a 3-1 deficit to advance. They inflicted back-to-back losses on Seattle for the first time since November and the worst defeat by the Sonics in the playoffs since 1978. "It's a special feeling to come from down, 3-1, against the team with the second-best record in the league," Utah's Jeff Hornacek said. "If we win Sunday, that'd be great. Nobody here has been to the finals."

Shaquille misses final Magic moment

ORLANDO (AFP) — Shaquille O'Neal might have departed the Orlando Magic without even saying goodbye.

The centre skipped the Magic's final team meeting, where players discussed plans for the next few months after being swept by the Chicago Bulls in their best-of-seven National Basketball Association semifinal.

The club also split its share of the playoff pool, \$579,250. But that is a pittance to O'Neal, who makes \$19 million in endorsements and who will be a free agent when contracts expire July 1.

O'Neal made \$5.7 million this past season. His absence increased talk that O'Neal is unhappy here and will look elsewhere for the \$20 million per year contract.

"I don't know where he is or why he wasn't here," Magic general manager John Gabriel said. "We won together as a team. We lost together as a team. It would have been nice to say our goodbyes for the summer as a team."

O'Neal reportedly is down on Orlando coach Brian Hill, who has been the subject of discussion regarding NBA coaching vacancies at New Jersey and Dallas after his club was swept out of the playoffs a third straight time.

"We had our team meeting, and it went very well," Hill said. "Shaquille was not there. I'm not sure where he was. Other than that, I'd rather not say anything until I've had a chance to speak to Shaquille directly."

FIFA set to solve 2002 World Cup problems

ZURICH (R) — As Japanese and South Korean soccer officials left for home Saturday they carried with them many unanswered questions about the 2002 World Cup finals which their countries will jointly host in six years' time.

The decision by FIFA's executive board — announced on Friday 24 hours earlier than expected — to stage the first World Cup in Asia in both Japan and South Korea brought mixed reactions from both sides, but guarded optimism from a man who knows how hard it is to organise a World Cup in one country.

American Jim Trecker, a member of the committee that organised the 1994 World Cup in the United States and who has worked as a consultant to the Japanese bid for the last two years, said the move represents all that was positive in the respective bids from both countries.

"You could say it was a win, win, win situation," he said. "A win for Japan, a win for Korea and a win for soccer. Now the two sides have to get together and overcome a number of cultural, social and political differences, and I am sure they can do it very successfully."

A working party of senior FIFA, Japanese and Korean officials was set up on Friday to examine the details of the planned joint venture and will report its initial findings to FIFA's executive committee meeting in December in Barcelona.

As well as dealing with sensitive issues like the venue for the final and opening ceremony — or ceremonies — they will also have to examine whether both countries qualify automatically as hosts and if they do, how that will affect the number of other qualifying Asian nations.

Then there is the question of the planned construction of World Cup stadiums in



FIFA executive member Keith Cooper (left) and Ken Naganuma (centre), chief of Japan's World Cup 2002 Bidding Committee, listen attentively to Mong-Joon Chung, chief of South Korea's World Cup 2002 Bidding Committee, at the press conference in Zurich, May 31, following FIFA's decision to jointly award the hosting of the 2002 World Cup finals to Japan and South Korea (Reuters photo)

both South Korea and Japan.

With 32 teams due to take part in 2002, both countries had planned to build 11 grounds and renovate four or five others. Stadium construction was the cornerstone of both their bids.

Clearly, there is no room for 22 new stadiums and eight or nine modernised ones so both nations will have to reconsider their planned construction programmes.

The man perceived to be behind the drive to co-host was Lennart Johansson, the Swedish president of UEFA and a FIFA vice-president. He had no doubts FIFA had made the right choice.

"It is a victory for common sense and for football," he said.

"There is still six years to go, plenty of time for these matters to be resolved."

Other matters that will need to be resolved concern ticketing, policing and pricing structures.

Of less immediate concern at this stage is where

teams will be based. Will 16 teams play in Korea, and another 16 in Japan with the winners meeting in a two-legged final?

FIFA spokesman Keith Cooper was adamant after the vote that the decision was taken to bring the two countries who share an unhappy history closer together, not drive them further apart.

"We don't want two World Cups we want one," he said. "Matters like where the final will be held are almost irrelevant at the moment, far bigger questions have to be answered first."

One question never in doubt was that both nations produced highly impressive bids.

South Korea's was based on their unrivalled soccer record in Asia, their long love affair with the game and a professional league that has been operating for 13 years compared to Japan's four. They have also qualified for four

World Cup finals, while Japan has never done so.

FIFA would also have been influenced by the thought that by giving the World Cup to South Korea, they may help to bring peace to the troubled Korean peninsula.

As well as both offering state of the art stadia, they also offered excellent communications, infrastructure and safety.

Japan's included their futuristic "virtual reality" stadium — where a 100-metre long image of a match taking place in one stadium is seen in another — as well as guaranteed growth of the J-league and vast amounts of money ploughed back into the development of the game throughout the world, as indeed did Korea's.

Japan's highly influential companies have long supported FIFA financially through sponsorships and in a way have now been "thanked" by FIFA with at least a share of the World Cup.

Bulls rest and wait for NBA finals

CHICAGO (AFP) — An eight-day break between playoff games will have the Chicago Bulls well-rested when they begin the National Basketball Association finals here Wednesday.

The Bulls, who won a record 72 regular-season games, swept Orlando in four games to take the Eastern Conference title and a berth against the Western champion, Sunday's seventh-game winner between Utah and Seattle.

Michael Jordan, Scottie Pippen and Toni Kukoc have struggled at times with back problems during playoff triumphs over Miami, New York and the Magic. But time off has healed most of the pain.

"Right now, nobody is complaining about their backs," Bulls' trainer Chip Schaefer said.

Chicago players have no great preference for finals' foes. They are happy the winner will have been extended through a grueling

seven-game stretch, the longest of any playoff series so far this season.

The Bulls split two games with Seattle while sweeping two from Utah in the regular season. Utah offer dream teamers Karl Malone and John Stockton plus outside threat Jeff Hornacek. Seattle have Shawn Kemp and Gary Payton.

"We know both teams relatively well," Chicago coach Phil Jackson said. "Utah is an experienced team with three creative and solid players and a bench that has had to grow and they are coming on strong."

"(Seattle) have probably the most gifted athletes in the league. What's unique about Seattle is their ability to generate energy off the runs they get and the steals they get off those runs. They are a spurt-type team."

Jackson frets the layoff will disrupt the overpowering rhythm Jordan and his teammates have established. But he gave the starters two days off this week while pushing reserves in challenging, two-hour sessions

White Sox win again but gain no ground on Indians

CHICAGO (R) — The Chicago White Sox keep winning but they can't seem to gain any ground on the first-place Cleveland Indians as the central division rivals each posted lopsided victories on Friday.

Kevin Tapani scattered seven singles over eight innings and Danny Tartabull and Dave Martinez hit two-run homers to power the White Sox to their 11th win in 13 games, a 9-0 rout of the hapless Detroit Tigers.

In Milwaukee, Dennis Martinez became the second eight-game winner in the American League and Manny Ramirez homered and drove in three runs as the Cleveland Indians stayed three games ahead of Chicago with a 10-4 thumping of the Brewers.

In Toronto, Pat Hentgen came within one out of his third complete game of the season and Sandy Martinez had two RBI as the Blue Jays beat the Kansas City Royals 4-2.

Hentgen (5-4) allowed two runs in 8 2/3 innings before Mike Timlin got the last out for Toronto. Mark Gubicza (4-7) allowed four runs and eight hits in six innings as the Royals lost for the fourth time in five games.

Joe Carter led off the three-run sixth with his 11th home run as Toronto tied the score 2-2. Ed Sprague, John Olerud and Martinez doubled to make it 4-2.

At Texas, Rusty Greer



Los Angeles Dodgers batter Mike Blowers (20) knuckle-touch's with runner Raul Mondesi in front of New York Mets catcher Todd Hudley at home plate after Blowers' two run homer in the second inning May 31 at New York's Shea Stadium (Reuters photo)

and Darryl Hamilton had two-run singles during a six-run third inning and Ken Hill pitched the Rangers to their sixth consecutive win, a 7-2 triumph over the Minnesota Twins.

At California, Rex Hudler homered and drove in a career-high five runs and Mark Langston looked sharp in his first start in more than a month as the Angels routed the Baltimore Orioles 10-3.

Baltimore scored first in the second, but the Angels came back with five runs off David Wells (3-5) in their half of the inning. Cal-

ifornia added five more runs in the fourth, capped by Tim Lincecum's seventh homer off reliever Archie Corbin.

In Oakland, Jimmy Key allowed one run over six innings in his return from the disabled list and Ruben Rivera hit his first Major League home run to lift the New York Yankees to a 4-1 victory over the Athletics.

With one out in the seventh, Rivera drove a 3-2 pitch from Doug Johns (4-6) over the left-centre field fence for the game winning run.

In Seattle, Alex

Rodriguez hit a three-run homer during a four-run seventh inning and Ken Griffey Jr. added his 18th homer as the Mariners for a 9-6 win over the Boston Red Sox.

With the score tied 5-5, Rich Garcia (0-2) surrendered Rodriguez's three-run shot to take the loss.

The Mariners scored four runs in the fifth to tie the game after Boston jumped out to a 5-1 lead.

Bob Wells (4-1) scattered four hits over 4 2/3 scoreless innings in relief of Paul Menhart to get the win.

Dallas Mavericks get new coach

DALLAS (R) — The National Basketball Association finals have not even started yet and rival clubs are already raiding the Chicago Bulls to help their own cause.

Bulls' assistant coach Jim Clemons was named the new coach of the NBA Dallas Mavericks here Friday. He was selected over former Phoenix coach Paul Westphal and ex-Boston coach Chris Ford.

Clemons has been with the Bulls for the last seven years, playing a behind-the-scenes role in three league crowns and a possible fourth.

Clemons, who rejected overtures from the expansion Toronto Raptors one year ago, will stay with the Bulls until the playoffs are over. Then he must prepare Dallas for the NBA draft June 26.

Dick Motta, the third-winningest coach in NBA history, stepped down as coach and Norm Sonju quit as general manager after the club was sold. The Mavericks were seen as a playoff possibility for the first time since 1990 but finished 26-56 after a season of bickering and injuries.

Hagi says Croatia could win Euro 96

BUCHAREST (R) — Romanian soccer star Gheorghe Hagi said Friday any one of a handful of Eastern European sides, particularly Croatia, were capable of delivering an upset at Euro 96.

"It is very possible that a national team from Eastern Europe will win at Wembley the European Championships," Hagi told Reuters of the June 30 Euro 96 final.

"Croatia have in their ranks many of the most outstanding international players and I'm giving them real chances to win the competition," he said.

Romania's most capped player with 96 after this Saturday's game against Moldova was one of the best players at the 1994 World Cup finals, leading his team to a surprising quarter-final finish.

"Nobody can now consider it a surprise if Croatia, Bulgaria, Russia, the Czech Republic or Romania reach, some of them, the European semifinals in England," Hagi said.

Bulgaria and Romania were the greatest surprises at the 1994 World Cup finals, finishing fourth and sixth in FIFA's rankings.

Hagi said the Western European club sides were taking grave risks in helping train their Eastern European players to such a high standard only to have to face them when they turned up in national teams hungry to defeat the Westerners.

"This is the risk of the new Europe: the best clubs of great soccer nations prepare footballers from small soccer countries who can one day beat their own countries," Hagi said.



Spain's pivot Etxaburu Castro keeps control of the ball on his way to score despite the efforts of two unidentified Yugoslavian players. Spain beat Yugoslavia 27-23, and qualified for the upcoming summer Olympics in Atlanta (Reuters photo)

<p>TODAY AT</p>	<p>CINEMA PHILADELPHIA TEL: 634144</p> <p>Sharon Stone & Robert Deniro..in Casino</p> <p>Shows: 12:15, 3:15, 6:00, 9:00</p>	<p>CINEMA PLAZA TEL: 699288</p> <p>MALICE</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30</p> <p>* Toy Story</p> <p>Show: 5:00</p>	<p>CINEMA CONCORD TEL: 634144</p> <p>CONCORD "1"</p> <p>* Natural Born Killers</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30</p> <p>CONCORD "2"</p> <p>* Too Hot To Handle</p> <p>Show: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30</p>	<p>Brilliant Theatre & Cinema TEL: 634144</p> <p>Will Shortly present Zawad Weld Awad theatre group in a play entitled</p> <p>Five-Star Government</p> <p>Starring comedians: Mahmoud Saimieh & Hussein Tubeishat</p>	<p>Abdel-Hisham's Theatre TEL: 634144</p> <p>PRESENTS THE SATIRICAL COMEDY Arab Human Rights</p> <p>Starts Monday, May 13 at 8:30 p.m.</p> <p>For reservation please call 625155 - 640155</p>
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JSF Shield final

Hussein, Ramtha meet today

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Soccer fans anxiously await the final match of the Jordan Soccer Federation (JSF) Shield competition when Al Hussein meet Al Ramtha in Irbid Sunday afternoon.

The Shield, reserved for Premier League teams only, is the second of four annual competitions organised by the JSF. Al Faisali already clinched the first title of the season when they beat Al Wihdat in the Cup Winners' Cup, the opening match of the soccer season.

Al Ramtha reached the final after knocking out titleholders Al Wihdat 3-1. The defeat was another blow for Al Wihdat who recently disappointed fans when they failed to advance beyond the first round of Arab Cup Winner's Cup which was recently concluded here. Al Faisali were also knocked out of the Shield when they lost to lowly Al Qozazi 2-1.

Al Hussein, whose win in the 1994 final brought them their first major title, reached the final after a 2-1 win over Kufroum.

Al Wihdat have won the title a record four times, Al Faisali and Al Ramtha three times, Al Jazireh and Amman twice and Al Hussein only once.

JSF Shield record

Year	Winner	Runner-up
1981	Al Jazireh	Al Ramtha
1982	Al Wihdat	Al Ramtha
1983	Al Wihdat	Al Faisali
1984	Amman	Al Faisali
1985	Amman	Al Ramtha
1986	Al Jazireh	Al Hussein
1987	Al Faisali	Al Wihdat
1988	Al Wihdat	

2nd division basketball concludes today Hussein promoted; Jeel runner up

By Aileen Bannayan Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Al Hussein and Al Jeel maintained their lead over the second division basketball championship standings which concludes Sunday following two scheduled matches in Irbid.

Al Jeel are in first place for now after concluding their matches Friday following a hard-fought 57-47 win over Homentmen, a former first division team who appeared well below their form this season.

Al Jeel will have the chance to join Al Hussein in the first division next year as stipulated in this year's competition regulations when they meet the last placed team in the first division later in the year. The winner of that playoff will secure a place in the first division.

The only unbeaten team

in the second division, Al Hussein, meet Al Rayah Sunday in a relatively easy encounter. Meanwhile, Al Ashrafieh meet Gazzer Hashem in the second match as both teams try to advance their standing among the six competing teams.

Two teams, Abbasi and Karak, became the two teams to drop to the third division. The former withdrew midway through the competition and were subsequently suspended by the Jordan Basketball Federation (JBF) for pulling out of JBF competitions for the second consecutive year.

In its latest meeting the JBF ruled that Al Abbasi be banned from participation in the federation's competitions, and that all club players be released from club and JBF records thus being able to join other teams as of the next season.

Third division champs Al Fuheis and runner up Abu Nusair will be promoted to the second division next season.

	P	W	L	SE	SA	Pts
Jeel	5	5	—	224	183	9
Hussein	4	4	—	301	196	8
Rayah	4	2	2	311	292	6
Homentmen	5	1	4	267	331	6
Ashrafieh	4	1	3	198	240	5
Gazzer Hashem	4	1	3	198	263	5
Abbasi	—	—	—	—	—	—
Karak	—	—	—	—	—	—

* Relegated to 3rd division



British Formula One driver Damon Hill drives his Williams Renault during the third free training session of the Spanish Grand Prix in Montmelo racetrack near Barcelona May 31 (Reuters photo)

Hill takes pole position

BARCELONA (AFP) — Britain's Damon Hill took pole position in the Spanish Formula One Grand Prix here Saturday, flying around the Catalunya track in 1min 20.650.

World championship leader Hill grabbed top spot for tomorrow's race by nearly half a second to end Michael Schumacher's hopes of a hat-trick of poles.

It's the Englishman's 15th pole position of his career and the fourth this year in a Williams-Renault.

Second on the grid for Sunday's race is Hill's teammate, Canadian Jacques Villeneuve, who shrugged off a blown engine suffered after he had set fastest time in practice earlier, to share the front row.

Double world champion Schumacher, who won here last year, was nearly a second adrift in third place as he fell away late in the session when he was forced to use the spare Ferrari.

Teammate Eddie Irvine was sixth quickest, coming in behind France's Jean Alesi and Austrian Gerhard Berger, both driving for Benetton-Renault.

Sauber's Johnny Herbert was ninth, David Coulthard

was 14th for McLaren while Martin Brundle, who is 37 today, finished 15th fastest for Jordan.

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PLAY OR DEFEND?

Both vulnerable. North deals		♠ K J 10 9 7 3 2	
NORTH		♠ Q 10	
♠ A K J 6 3		♠ 4 5	
♥ Q			
♦ A 8 4 2			
♣ Q 4 3			
WEST		EAST	
♠ 8 5 2	♠ Q	♠ A 5 4	♠ 6 3
♥ 8 6	♥ A 5 4	♥ 6 3	♥ A K J 9 7 2
♦ K J 7 5	♦ A K J 9 7 2	♦ A K J 9 7 2	♦ A K J 9 7 2
♣ 10 8 5	♣ 10 8 5	♣ 10 8 5	♣ 10 8 5
SOUTH		WEST	
♠ 10 7 4		♠ 10 7 4	

Opening lead: Eight of ♠. Study the diagram. If West leads a club against four hearts, you will have no trouble making your game.

since club ruff in hand will permit trumps to be drawn, after which your side suit winners can be cashed without fear of an enemy ruff. However, assuming West attacks with the eight of trumps, would you rather play or defend four hearts?

With the queen of spades coming down on the first round, it seems that you need only lose one trick in each suit except spades. However, there is the threat of a spade ruff. If you elect to defend, you had better grab the ace of hearts at trick one. If not, declarer overtakes the queen of hearts with the king and leads another trump. You win and shift to the queen of spades. Declarer takes the trick on the table and leads a club, and you can score either a spade ruff or a diamond, but not both.

Best defense is for East to win

PARIS (AFP) — Spanish qualifier Gala Leon-Garcia sensationally put out sixteenth-seeded Barbara Paulus of Austria in three sets in the third-round of the French Open here Saturday — and then revealed that she had only two rackets with her for the tournament.

"I have been waiting for my new rackets to arrive from my sponsors but there is no sign of them," said the 22-year-old after notching up a 6-4, 2-6, 6-3 win.

"I only have two with me for this tournament — so I'm restring them before each match and just hope they don't break."

"If I were to break them both — perhaps somebody will lend me one."

Leon-Garcia, whose parent runs a snack bar in Madrid, has been sending shock waves through women's tennis and has won few friends among the Japanese contingent at the championships after putting out Ana Miyagi and Kyoko Nagatsuka in the first two rounds.

She now faces fifth-seed Iva Majoli, who beat Sandrine Testud of France in a thrilling three-set marathon stretched over nearly three hours, for a place in the quarter-finals.

Paulus is the fourth women's seed to fail to last the first week at the world's most gruelling tournament. Switzerland's 15th seed Martina Hingis, 12th seed Mary Pierce of France, and Holland's eighth-seeded Brenda Schultz-McCarthy.

Stich, Coetzer win

Fifteenth-seed Michael Stich came back after dropping the first set to beat Mikael Tillstrom of Sweden 4-6, 6-0, 6-4, 7-6 (7/3) and reach the fourth-round of the men's singles at the French Open here Saturday.

The 27-year-old German, who badly injured his left ankle at Vienna last year, played only two matches (in Rome) before arriving in Paris after reinjuring his ankle in Milan in March.

He now plays either defending champion Thomas Muster of Austria or Adrian Panatta of Romania.

Meanwhile, South Africa's diminutive fourteenth-seed Amanda Coetzer surged back after dropping the second set to beat former finalist Natasha Zvereva 6-3, 3-6, 6-2 in the third-round of the women's singles at the French Open.

The 5ft 2in (1m57) Coetzer now plays either third-seed Conchita Martinez of Spain or Ann Grossman of the United States for a place in the quarter-finals.

Rios reigns on centre-court

Chile's Marcelo Rios took the Roland Garros centre-court by storm here Saturday when he overwhelmed 1992 finalist Petr Korda of the Czech Republic 6-3, 6-3, 6-2 to reach the quarter-finals of the men's

singles at the French Open. Rios then simply shrugged when asked if he thought he might one day be the world's number-one player.

"Why not?" said the 20-year-old South American, making no effort to disguise his dislike of meeting the press.

The ninth-seeded Rios, considered one of the rising stars of world tennis, scored an emphatic victory over the 1992 tournament finalist in just one and a half hours to reach a showdown with either Frenchman Cedric Pioline or another French Open finalist — Alberto Berasategui of Spain.

The 20-year-old left-hander from Santiago, who failed to get past the second-round in his two previous visits to the French capital, recently gatecrashed the world's "top-ten" after a sensational start to the clay court season.

A finalist in Barcelona, and a semi-finalist at Indian Wells, Monte Carlo and Hamburg — Rios confirmed his form last weekend by winning the ATP event at St. Polten.

But his relations with the world's press reached a new low on Saturday when he answered their questions with monosyllabic arrogance.

Asked what his interest were away from the court he replied: "Did he follow a special training schedule for different surfaces — 'no.' Or special diets as he travelled the world — 'no.' Did he prefer to play Pioline or Berasategui in the next round — 'I don't care.'"

Rios, whose father is an engineer and whose mother is a teacher, did manage to explain that he felt he was playing better now than at the start of the week, that he would not go to Wimbledon, and wanted to play the Masters at the end of the year.

He also said, although it was hardly necessary, that he was feeling "confident."

Defending champion Steffi Graf reached the quarter-finals of the women's singles when her third-round Czech opponent Petra Langrova was forced to retire after pulling a groin muscle.

Graf, who was leading 6-0, 1-0 on Roland Garros' number-one show-court, now plays either eleventh-seed Mary Joe Fernandez of the United States or "lucky-loser" Gloria Pizzichini of Italy.

Langrova, ranked a modest 205th, had played the qualifying tournament for a place in the main draw.

Graf was steaming home and leading 5-0 after just 17 minutes. Langrova took a three-minute injury time-out.

The 26-year-old German player meanwhile delighted the crowd by giving one of her rackets to a ball-boy and holding a rally.

Langrova returned and tried to play on but she was clearly in pain. She did not

FRENCH OPEN

'Two-racket' qualifier moves into the big time



Pete Sampras

win another point in the next two games.

Graf, seeded to play her great rival and joint world number-one Monica Seles in next Saturday's final, is bidding for a fifth title win after her 1987, 1988, 1993 and 1995 triumphs.

Iva Majoli flirted with disaster before reaching the last-sixteen. The fifth-seeded Croatian, playing 39th-ranked Sandrine Testud of France, dropped the first set and had to fight her way back from 3-5 in the second and then won a marathon eleventh game with the score level at 5-5, before clinching a 4-6, 7-5, 6-4 victory. The match lasted 2hrs 45mins.

Majoli now plays either 16th-seeded Austrian Barbara Paulus or Gala Leon Garcia of Spain for a place in the last-four.

Kimiko Date, who rewrote the history books twelve months ago by becoming the first Japanese player to reach the semi-finals, also moved into the fourth round when she beat American Linda Wild 6-3, 7-5.

The seventh-seeded Japanese player now plays either slimmer-down ninth seed Lindsay Davenport of the United States, who won in Strasbourg last weekend, or Yayuk Basuki of Indonesia.

Hingis out, Courier, Seles advance

In Friday's late matches, Mary Pierce was booed off court by an uncompromising Roland Garros crowd after crashing to a humiliating defeat at the French Open Friday — while Monica Seles and Pete Sampras garnered the cheers and pursued their title dreams with fighting performances.

Pierce gave the fans a last glimpse of the now-famous and revealing black tennis dress, when she was badly beaten 4-6, 2-6 in just 73 minutes on an overcast centre-court by Germany's Barbara Rittner.

World number-one Pete Sampras had to go the distance against his compatriot and friend Todd Martin and

joint women's top-seed Monica Seles needed to stage a spectacular recovery in the second set of her clash with Sabine Appelmans of Belgium.

Sampras, who also needed five sets to put out twice-champion Sergi Bruguera of Spain in the second-round, was "outaced" but still managed to reach the last-sixteen, thanks to a 3-6, 6-4, 7-5, 4-6, 6-2 victory over Martin.

Martin hammered down 29 aces and Sampras 20 during the 3hrs 20mins match.

The two men, the best of friends, had eaten dinner together the previous evening but on court they remained superb rivals.

"Todd is a classy guy and certainly a very good friend," said Sampras after his eleventh win in 13 encounters with the 6ft 6in (1m98) from Illinois.

"There's no gamesmanship out there, no problems when we play. We just go out there and play our tennis."

Sampras, who is seeded to play last year's winner Thomas Muster in the final on Sunday week and bidding to win the only Grand Slam title missing from his collection, now plays Australian Scott Draper who will be 22 on Wednesday.

Draper, who beat American "bad boy" Jeff Tarango of the United 6-1, 6-2, 6-3, is the only Australian left in the singles — Todd Woodbridge going out to 13th seed Richard Krajicek of the Netherlands.

"I have never played Pete before," said Draper after defeating the player best remembered for storming off court at Wimbledon last year after screaming obscenities at the umpire, "but I think I have a chance of causing an upset on clay. But Pete's the ultimate professional and he's going to give everything he's got."

Monica Seles, bidding for a fourth French title, came safely through her third-round encounter with Sabine Appelmans of Belgium thanks to a 6-2, 7-5 victory.

But the 22-year-old American, playing the event

for the first time since she was stabbed on court in Hamburg in 1993, had to fight all the way after trailing 1-4 down in the second-set.

"I think we both played really well," said Seles, who is seeded to play her great rival Steffi Graf in the final.

"When we came to the net at the end of the match we both said that we had enjoyed the match very much. It's unusual for players to say that to each other. So that was great."

"I am getting more and more comfortable as the matches go by," she said, referring to the shoulder injury which forced her to withdraw from the Spanish Open last week.

Seles now plays thirteenth-seed Magdalena Maleeva of Bulgaria. Maleeva beat Miriam Oremans of the Netherlands 6-2, 6-1.

In other matches Jim Courier, the 1971 and 1972 champion, reached a fourth-round berth against tenth-seed Wayne Ferreira of South Africa.

Courier qualified when his opponent Karol Kucera of Slovakia was forced to retire with an ankle injury. The American was leading 6-7 (2/7), 7-5, 6-4, 5-4, when Kucera was forced to quit.

Ferreira beat Renzo Furlan of Italy 6-7 (5/7), 7-5, 6-1, 7-5.

The fairy-tale run of g-antkiller Chris Woodruff, who ended Andre Agassi's title dreams Wednesday, ended when he was beaten in a five-set thriller by Sweden's Jonas Bjorkman.

Woodruff finally surrendered 6-7 (5/7), 6-2, 6-4, 5-7, 4-6 leaving Bjorkman to face Krajicek.

Apart from Pierce, the only other seeds to fall were Brenda Schultz-McCarthy of the Netherlands and Martina Hingis of Switzerland.

McCarthy-Schultz, the eighth-seed, was beaten by Irina Spirlea of Romania 6-3, 3-6, 6-2 while fifteenth-seeded Hingis went out in her third-round match to Karina Hubudova of Slovakia — recently runner-up to Steffi Graf in Berlin.

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Netanyahu's cabinet choice could unveil his peace intentions

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel and its Arab neighbours were watching closely Saturday for the first signs of the likely cabinet make-up of Israeli Prime Minister-elect Benjamin Netanyahu, which would reveal his government's tack on the Middle East peace process.

A day after the right-wing nationalist leader's narrow electoral victory over peace architect Shimon Peres was confirmed, analysts said his cabinet appointments for defence and foreign affairs would be crucial in determining whether Mr. Netanyahu will genuinely pursue peace with Israel's Arab neighbours.

In particular, all eyes are on hardline right-wingers such as Ariel Sharon and Raphael Eitan, both opponents of the landmark Oslo accords concluded with the Palestinians which granted them limited autonomy in the occupied territories.

"If Mr. Netanyahu chooses his defence minister from one of these two officials, he will

be making it clear that the peace process is buried," said Hanan Cristal, a political analyst with Israel's public radio.

Mr. Sharon, a noted champion of Jewish colonisation of Palestinian territories, has already held the top job in the defence ministry, presiding among other things over Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982.

Mr. Eitan, the head of the extreme-right Tzomet party allied to Mr. Netanyahu's Likud, was chief-of-staff at the same time.

If on the other hand, Mr. Netanyahu opts for the more dovish element within the Likud bloc by appointing former Justice Minister Dan Meridor, former Major-General Yitzhak Mordechai, or Ehud Olmert, it will send the opposite signal.

"In this case, the government will have made it clear to the world that it has decided to continue negotiations with the Palestinians," Mr. Cristal said.

The nomination of a more

conciliatory defence minister would likely be accompanied by a similarly moderate appointment at the foreign ministry. David Levy, a centrist who has already held the post, starts as favourite, according to analysts here.

But a more dramatic, although less likely, third alternative besides hawks and doves is still possible. Mr. Netanyahu could decide to form a government of national unity, in which case he could call on the Labour Party's outgoing foreign minister, Ehud Barak, to head up the defence ministry.

Mr. Barak, a former chief-of-staff, was once Mr. Netanyahu's boss while the dapper right-wing leader was performing his military service in an elite commando.

Mr. Netanyahu, who has 45 days after final results are given next week to present his cabinet to parliament, has given no clues so far. Mr. Olmert has speculated that the formation of the government will take around 10 days.

GCC will continue to back peace effort

MUSCAT (AFP) — The Gulf Arab countries will continue to support the Middle East peace so long as Israel's new right-wing government remains committed to it, Oman's minister of State for foreign affairs said Saturday.

Youssef Ben Alawi Abdullah said the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) "will continue its support for the peace process if the new Israeli government is committed to finalising the agreements made by the former Labour government."

The GCC groups Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. Oman and Qatar have established trade links with the Jewish state.

The Gulf Arab Press, which broadly reflects official views, expressed hope Saturday that the peace process would not be derailed because of the victory of right-wing nationalist leader Benjamin Netanyahu as Israeli prime minister.

"Peace has become an international reality that is bigger than any person," said the Saudi daily Al Bilad in an editorial dedicated to Mr. Netanyahu's victory over incumbent Shimon Peres.

"What interests Saudi Arabia is the continuation of the peace process, Netanyahu or Peres, the person doesn't matter," said the paper.

"Peace is a goal that had to be reached to protect the region from violence and counter-violence," said Al-Bilad, which along with most newspapers in the Gulf, re-

flect government positions.

The Saudi newspaper Okaz shared the same opinion, adding that Mr. Netanyahu "will have no other choice but to pursue the Middle East peace process and bow to international will."

The Qatari newspaper Al Raya said, "Even if the policies of the new prime minister give priority to security over peace, time must be given to the new Israeli government to demonstrate its intentions and there should be no quick judgements."

The paper urged Arab governments to "urgently" make consultations to examine the new situation created by Mr. Netanyahu's rise to power.

"We cannot give in to panic, or take action before knowing (Netanyahu's) true positions," the Qatari daily Al Watan said.

The English-language Qatari newspaper Peninsula predicted "difficult challenges for the Palestinian (National) Authority and its leader Yasser Arafat."

It pointed out that "peace began in the Middle East under a government led by Likud," referring to the first peace accords signed with Egypt in 1979.

"Peace will continue, with or without Peres," said the Kuwaiti newspaper Al Siyassah.

Another Kuwaiti paper, Al Qabas, added that the two losers in the Israeli elections are "US policy, which supported Peres with millions of dollars, and Arafat, who gave Peres the key to solving the Palestinian problem."

Asia concerned over Israeli election result

HONG KONG (R) — Asian countries were concerned on Saturday that right-winger Benjamin Netanyahu's shock victory in Israel's election would hamper the Middle East peace process.

Regional leaders congratulated the Likud leader but the underlying sentiment was that Mr. Netanyahu's whisker-thin victory over Shimon Peres on Wednesday would endanger peacemaking.

The leading Kompas newspaper in mostly-Muslim Indonesia said in an editorial that Mr. Netanyahu's victory had created anxiety.

"The Arab community generally believes that Likud's victory will endanger the peace process in the Middle East. But Western leaders are pretty sure that Likud's rule will only slow down the peace process, and will not kill it," it said.

Kompas said the United States would find it more difficult to deal with the Likud party than the Labour Party led by Mr. Peres who had a clear commitment towards peace.

Mr. Netanyahu has made clear his opposition to land-for-peace deals with Arabs and the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto said he



Sheikh Isa Bin Salman

Bahrain to expand consultative council, emir says

MANAMA (Agencies) — The emir of Bahrain, under pressure from opponents to restore parliament, on Saturday announced an increase in the number of members of the country's hand-picked consultative council and an expansion of its role.

"The time is right to strengthen this assembly by increasing its members so it represents all social categories and by giving it more power of initiative to improve its role," Sheikh Issa Bin Salman Al Khalifa said.

"The council must become more involved in the concerns of citizens and come up with its own proposals and initiatives to put to the government," he added, quoted by the official Gulf News Agency (GNA).

He did not specify when the reforms would be implemented.

The council or Shura is made up of 30 leading dignitaries and businessmen nominated by the ruling authorities. Set up by the emir in 1992, it has advisory but no legislative powers.

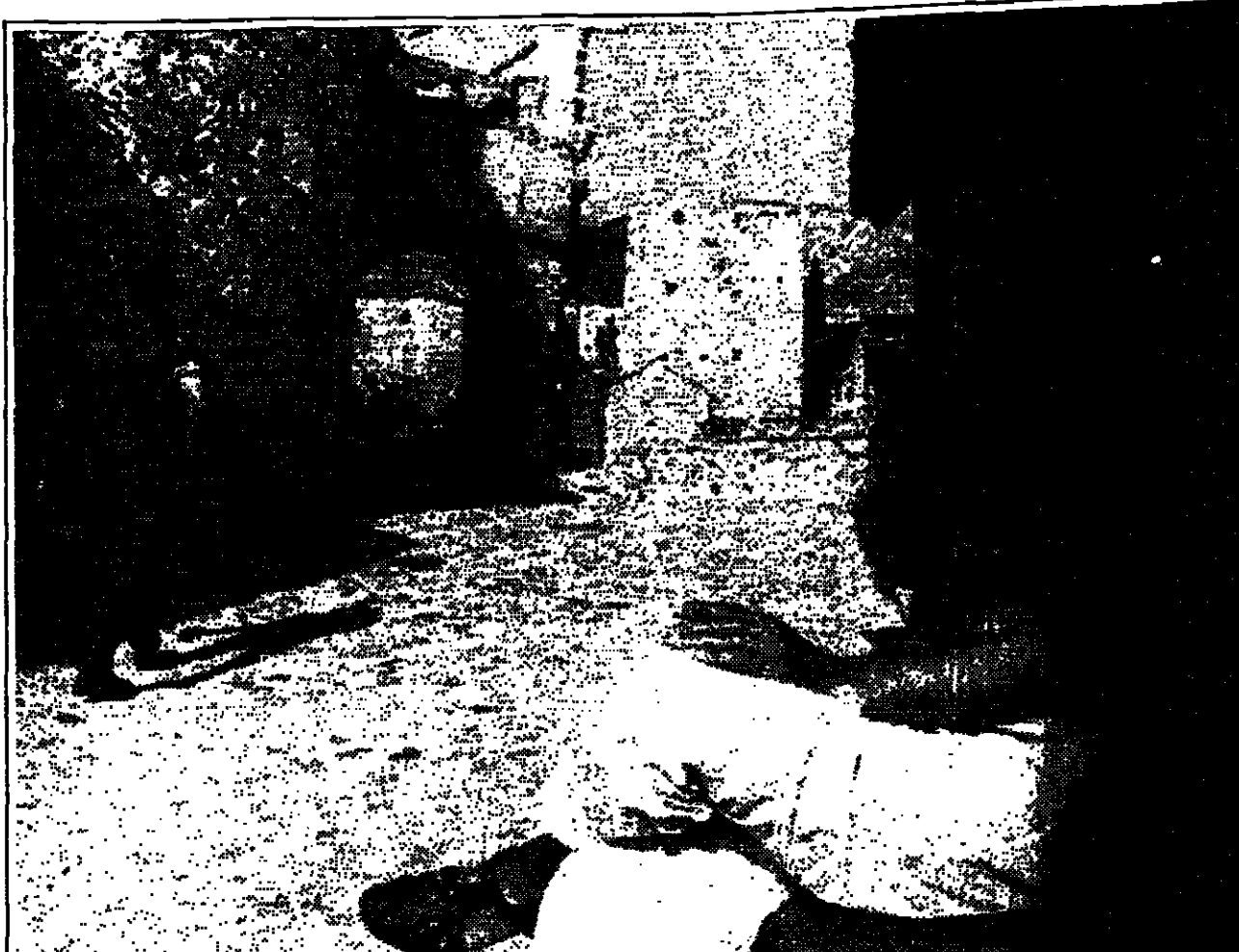
The emir has talked about reforming the council since December 1994, when political unrest erupted after the arrest of a leading Shiite Muslim cleric who called for the restoration of parliament suspended in 1975 a year and a half after its election.

At least 22 people have died in the ensuing violence. Bahrain and four other Gulf Arab states — Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Oman — have a consultative council. Only a sixth, Kuwait, has an elected council.

Bahrain's National Assembly was dissolved in 1975 — two years after being elected — and the 30-member Shura council was appointed in 1992 to assist the government in running the country's political and economic affairs.

The Shura gives views on draft laws submitted by Bahrain's cabinet before they were sent to the emir for final approval.

Prime Minister Sheikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa, the emir's brother, in January said the government wanted to make Shura a decision-making body in partnership with the government.



CALM IN MOSTAR: A Bosnian man sits in front of his souvenir shop in the old town of Mostar as a Spanish peacekeeper patrols the streets. The European Union administrator in Mostar announced on Thursday that elections would now take place in the divided south Bosnian town on June 30. Elections were originally scheduled for the end of May but non-Croat parties in Mostar refused to register, saying the rules meant that people driven from their homes during the Bosnian war would have been unable to vote (Reuters photo)

U.S. cautions its nationals living in S. Arabia after convicts executed

DUBAI (R) — Americans in Saudi Arabia should remain cautious following the execution of four Saudis for bombing a U.S.-run military training centre, the U.S. embassy said on Saturday.

A State Department warning in May to the 35,000 Americans living in Saudi Arabia, following threats that U.S. interests and citizens would be attacked if the four were executed, was still in effect, an embassy spokesman said.

"There is no way to know if these threats are serious. The only practical thing to do is for Americans to be cautious," one Western diplomat said.

The four, who in April confessed on state television to the Nov. 13 bombing which killed five Americans and two Indians, were beheaded by the sword on Friday in a square in Riyadh.

Some 60 people were also wounded in the attack which shocked ordinary Saudis and officials alike in the world's largest oil producer and exporter and Washington's key

Arab ally.

The State Department on May 15 urged Americans to exercise caution, keep a low profile, reduce travel throughout Saudi Arabia and "treat mail received from unfamiliar sources with suspicion."

It said it remained concerned about possible attacks.

Saudi Interior Minister Prince Nayef said last month the kingdom did not rule out more bombings.

Newspapers said on Saturday anyone threatening Saudi security would receive the same punishment as the four Saudis.

"The punishment makes it clear the kingdom will not allow extremism... the kingdom will not tolerate crime whatever its motives or whoever executes it," said Al Riyadh daily.

Al Yom said the four deserved the punishment they received and said the kingdom was determined to "strike with an iron fist anyone who tries to destabilise the country's security."

Several obscure opposition groups claimed responsibility for the attack but Saudi Arabia has not clearly pointed the finger at any faction.

The four had in their confessions said they were influenced by Islamist groups outside the kingdom, including dissident Mohammad Al Masaari who was recently granted leave to stay in Britain. Mr. Masaari denied he had influenced the four.

Mr. Masaari and his Committee for Defence of Legitimate Rights have waged a relentless campaign against the Saudi royal family, accusing it of corruption and calling for a peaceful transition to Islamic rule.

King Fahd suffered a stroke last November shortly after the bombing and at the beginning of 1996 handed over the affairs of state to his half-brother Crown Prince Abdullah. He reassumed power seven weeks later.

There are about 5,000 Americans, French and British military personnel deployed in Gulf Arab states and thousands more on

warships patrolling the region to implement United Nations sanctions imposed against Iraq since the 1990-91 Gulf crisis.

Residents in Riyadh said they noticed on Friday evening "more than usual" police patrols on main intersections but not a heightened state of alert.

There were no signs of extra security on Saturday at presidential compounds where Americans live. Heavy security had been imposed around the embassy and many of the compounds after the bombing.

In London, the human rights group Amnesty International on Friday said it was outraged by the execution describing it as "summary and arbitrary" and a violation of human rights.

Saudi Arabia is home to two of Islam's holiest shrines and implements strict Sharia law which stipulates public execution by the sword for those found guilty of murder, rape, drug smuggling and other serious crimes.

Khamenei lambasts 'deluded' moderates

TEHRAN (AFP) — Paramount leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei launched a virulent attack Saturday on moderates within the Iranian leadership, accusing them of seeking prosperity at the expense of fundamental Islamic values.

"The mirage of development risks alienating U.S. from our fundamental values and driving us down the path to dependence," Ayatollah Khamenei said in a message read out to an inauguration ceremony for the new Iranian parliament.

Ayatollah Khamenei, who mentioned no names, was criticising a new class of technocrats grouped around President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani which favours Western-style development and easing strict Islamic regulations.

The moderates, who ran under the name "the Servants of Construction" in the March legislative elections, were roundly defeated by right-wing Islamic conservatives loyal to Ayatollah Khamenei. The right favours strict adherence to fundamental religious values.

"The general trend of the parliament must conform to Islamic values," the Iranian leader said in his message.

"The illusion of reconstruction is a source of corruption," he said, denouncing the "corrupt liberal culture of the West" and urging deputies to "resist the satanic temptation of certain (officials) who have infiltrated higher ranks."

The Ayatollah added: "Those who claim that by entering the era of reconstruction we should abandon our slogans are a dangerous phenomenon."

Ayatollah Khamenei, who acts as arbiter and guardian

of the Islamic regime in Iran, came out in support of the right-wing conservatives in the polls. But it was his first violent attack against the moderates.

A total of 247 deputies were sworn in during the ceremonies for Iran's fifth national assembly since the revolution. Many other political and religious dignitaries, including Mr. Rafsanjani, also attended.

The Iranian parliament has a total of 270 seats but 23 are still undecided. The Council of Guardians, which supervises elections here, annulled votes in 21 constituencies for alleged irregularities and the results of two other districts have not yet been determined.

By-elections are to be held in five months to decide the rest of the seats, most of which were initially swept by moderates.

In a speech to the assembly, Mr. Rafsanjani said he "deplored the cancellation of votes," but added that he was "rather pleased" with the general outcome of the elections.

The president did not respond to the attacks launched by Ayatollah Khamenei against his political supporters, but said the leader had "said it all" and "drawn the guidelines" for the future course of the parliament.

The president also called attention to the United States "direct confrontation" with Iran, urging the Islamic republic to take on the "satanic power as it has repeatedly done since the revolution."

The new assembly will convene on Sunday to designate a speaker and a provisional board to verify the credentials of all deputies before it can legislate.

Iraq sees a new era of cooperation with U.N.

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq said on Saturday that its oil-for-food plan signed with the United Nations would usher in a new era of cooperation between Baghdad and the world body.

Abdul Amir Al Anbari, Iraq's chief negotiator to the New York talks which led to the signing of the deal on May 20, said the agreement was a turning point in relations between his country and the U.N.

"The agreement will pave the way for new relations and contacts (with the U.N.) based on mutual understanding, reconciliation and confidence between Iraq and the world organisation," Mr. Anbari said in remarks carried by the official newspaper Al Iraq.

Under the deal Iraq signed with the United Nations, Baghdad is allowed to export oil worth \$2 billion every six months to raise money to buy much-needed food and medicine for its impoverished population.

Mr. Anbari, who is Iraq's representative to the Paris-based United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), praised U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali for efforts to bring the talks to success.

"Despite his duties and travels, he (Ghali) was keen to follow the talks... and his interpolations were positive," Mr. Anbari said.

Mr. Anbari said that U.S. firms were anxious to deal with Baghdad and the prevailing trend in Washington was to allow American firms to strike trade deals with Iraq for the purchase of oil and export of American goods to the country.

Iraq's Oil Minister Amir Rasheed, also in newspaper remarks on Saturday, said the deal would provide Iraq

with \$220 million every month. This, he said, would help to improve Iraq's economy crippled by U.N. trade sanctions imposed for Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Some of the revenue from the oil sales will be used to compensate victims of the invasion.

Finance Minister Hikmat Mezban Ibrahim, in an interview in the official Al Qadisiya newspaper, said he expected the Iraqi currency to gain in value once Iraqi oil exports hit international markets.

Iraq's dinar currency has risen considerably against the U.S. dollar since January on prospects of partial oil exports. From about 3,000 to one dollar, it strengthened to below 1,000 and on Saturday was trading at 860.

Iraqi and Turkish experts said on Friday Baghdad was pumping 350,000 barrels per day to fill its twin-pipelines via Turkey and Iraqi crude would reach the Turkish Mediterranean terminal of Ceyhan by midnight on Saturday.

Meanwhile, the United States appears set to make a formal announcement next week authorising American oil firms to buy Iraqi oil under the oil-for-food deal and officials said details were still being worked out.

A presidential decree had been expected this week, but an administration official said a number of legal details had to be cleared before it is issued.

The official declined to confirm directly that the White House was ready to allow U.S. firms to buy Iraqi oil for the first time since 1990.

COLUMN 8

Father, son faked hate crime to drum up business

MIAMI (AP) — An official at a Jewish school helped drum up business for his father's auto repair service by sending teenagers to vandalise the school's buses and make it look like an anti-Semitic attack. Steven Rubin, 28, was convicted along with his father, 46-year-old Al Rubin, on charges including theft, conspiracy and criminal mischief. The Rubins arranged for two teenagers to tear all the seats on 15 Hillel Community Day School buses and spray-paint anti-Semitic slogans and Swastikas around the place. The younger Rubin, transportation director at the school, then steered the repair business to his father's Priority Car Care Service. A mechanic who worked for the elder Rubin testified he acted as the middleman, paying the vandals \$50. "It was really terrible that a member of our family could do this," said Marshall Baluch, the school's executive director. "I feel relieved that justice was done." Steven Rubin could get up to 92 years in prison at sentencing July 12. His father could receive 37 years.

San Diego Symphony files for bankruptcy

SAN DIEGO, California (R) — for a year now, the San Diego Symphony has been on the verge of playing its last note. The finale came Friday as the board filed for bankruptcy. A petition filed in U.S. Bankruptcy Court here lists more than \$5 million in liabilities. The symphony's assets amount to \$6.4 million, including the 2,255-seat Copley Symphony Hall, which could be sold. Musicians haven't been paid for months and the symphony cancelled its last seven scheduled performances. The struggle to stay afloat financially has been a constant one for several years. The last time it closed, in 1986, the symphony was silent for 18 months, until a community fund-raising effort revived it. Another financial crisis, back in 1921 forced its longest intermission, for five years.

Hashimoto picked as Japan's 'worst smoker'

TOKYO (AFP) — A Japanese anti-smoking organisation has lashed Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto as "the worst smoker" in the country, saying he was setting a terrible example to the public by his chain-smoking habit. "We want to make a nationwide protest against the wretched politicians who discuss the future of the country with a cigarette in their mouth," the Metropolitan Association on Smoking or Heath said in a statement as it announced the result of a recent poll on World No-Smoking Day. Mr. Hashimoto reaped an overwhelming 185 points in the votes cast by 19 anti-smoking groups in the Tokyo Metropolitan area as well as by 28 individuals. He got nearly twice as many votes as another notorious weed-puffer, professional golfer Masahiro Ozaki, who got 95 points. Also among the top 10 were Japan Tobacco President Takeshi Hijikata, comedian Best Takeshi and teenage idol Takuya Kimura. The prime minister had several famous episodes over his smoking, with the latest being a scene at a cabinet meeting earlier this week. Mr. Hashimoto reportedly kept puffing away as Health Minister Naoto Kan urged his colleagues to give him their support on No-Smoking Day.